Hafa Adai!

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Stardust club owners, 2 employees found guilty. PAGE 2

Saipan delegation defeats gaming plan. PAGE 3

15th fails to pass budget

16th Legislature vows another stab at it

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

The Senate is deferring action on the fiscal year 2008 budget until the new Legislature assumes office next week.

Floor Leader Felix Mendiola said the senators have agreed to delay the budget until after they all come back for the 16th Legislature.

"There are just too many issues we

See 15TH on Page 4

FMI CLEANUP JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Friends of the Mariana Islands volunteer Malou Lumbad, together with other 23 hard-working members headed by its president Marites Castillo, clean up a large drainage area along Tun Joaquin Doi Street going down to Chalan Kanoa Sunday morning for the Inshore Drainage Cleanup/Restoration Environmental Project funded by MOBIL Oil Mariana Islands Inc. Inset shows Jun Flores clearing up the drainage canal.

$9M diverted to CUC since emergency

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Fitial

Some $9 million has been reprogrammed to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. since the state of emergency declaration.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial said in a report to the Legislature that $2.5 million was taken from Commonwealth funds to ensure fuel delivery to CUC on Dec. 15, 2007. Affected government agencies shared

See $9M on Page 4

RELATED NEWS

'State of emergency corrects bad legislation'

PAGE 2

'Chamber will take lead in developing local workforce'

By MARK RABAGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Newly installed Saipan Chamber of Commerce president James T. Arenovski said the business group will take a proactive approach in developing the local workforce even as the private sector is expected to have a hard time adjusting to the new local labor law.

"We all know the face of our labor

See CHAMBER on Page 4

Arenovski

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Did you max out your credit card(s) this past holiday season?

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INSIDE

Plane Crash

A chartered plane that crashed into a shallow harbor after taking off from Kodiak Island, killing six people.

NATION...Page 14

Suicide Blast

A suicide attacker wearing an explosives vest at an Army Day celebration Sunday killed at least 11 people.

WORLD...Page 16

Nissan Altima

For buyers who like the Altima sedan but want something that looks sportier, there's now an Altima coupe.

OVERDRIVE...Page 17

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Local

Club owners, two employees found guilty

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
REPORTER

The owners and two employees of the former Stardust Club were convicted yesterday of hiring minor girls from the Philippines using different names and forged birth certificates.

David M. Atalig and his wife Corazon R. Atalig, owners of Stardust Club, signed a plea agreement with the government.

David Atalig pleaded "no contest" to one count of immigration fraud, while Corazon Atalig pleaded "no contest" to four counts of aiding, abetting, and encouraging illegal entry.

The employees—Nilda Maniego and Priscilla D. Rulloda—pleaded "no contest" to one count of harboring of an illegal alien. Maniego and Rulloda are sisters of Corazon Atalig.

The remaining charges against the defendants were dismissed as part of the agreement.

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman accepted the agreement and the defendants' plea.

With respect to David Atalig, Wiseman set the sentencing for Feb. 14, 2008. He directed the Office of Adult Probation to conduct a pre-sentence investigation and submit the report one week prior to the sentencing date.

The plea agreement in David Atalig's case provides for a sentence within the range of two to five years in prison subject to a pre-sentence report and hearing. The agreement also provides for a probation period of up to three years.

In Corazon Atalig's case, Wiseman sentenced her to 364 days in prison for all counts, to run concurrently, with two days credit for time already served.

This means that Corazon Atalig will serve a total of 362 days more. She was directed to start serving the prison term on Jan. 28, 2008 at 8am and shall be released on Jan. 25, 2009 at 8am.

Wiseman said Corazon Atalig shall be eligible for parole as determined by the Board of Parole.

"There is no fine in as much as the parties are resolving a companion civil matter before the Director of Labor which involves substantial compensation or payment by defendants. Furthermore, Star Four Corp. and Stardust Night Club shall cease as ongoing business concerns in that same administrative proceeding," the judge said.

With respect to Maniego and Rulloda, Wiseman suspended the imposition of sentence and placed the two on probation for three years.

The probation conditions include that Maniego and Rulloda will voluntarily depart the CNMI at their own expenses on or before Jan. 23, 2008.

The two were ordered to each pay $25 in court assessment fee.

In April 2006, authorities arrested the Atalig couple for allegedly employing minor girls and forcing them to dance naked and do other lewd things.

The defendants denied the charges.

The government alleged that the nightclubs used hired minor girls from Philippines using different names and forged birth certificates.

The defendants allegedly locked up the victims by not allowing them to go out from the establishment without escorts.

But nine other employees of Stardust and Star Light nightclubs defended their employers from the allegations they were employing minor girls and forcing them to dance naked.

They said their employers never forced them to dance naked because before they were hired in the Philippines they were already informed about their job as strip tease dancers.

In fact, the workers said, they were videotaped before coming to the island in which they stated that they are not forced to dance naked. They said they are not minors.

GIVING 'EM A HEAD START JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Ten-year-old Lima Seman, a member of the Wellipal Cultural Dance Group, takes a rest after performing a traditional Carolinian dance number to welcome the first visit of the USS *Jefferson City* (SSN-759) at the Port of Saipan Saturday morning. The submarine, homeported in San Diego, California, carries a total number of 138 military personnel and is set to submerge early morning on Jan 10.

'State of emergency corrects bad legislation'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
REPORTER

The state of emergency is what allows the Fitial administration to correct bad legislation, according to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

CUC spokesperson Pamela Mathis told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the state of emergency does not set the electric fuel rate. Rather, it allows the administration to "correct poor legislation that created and continues to create massive shortfalls or losses in the public utility."

The legislation allows the majority of residential customers to pay nothing (zero) for non-fuel, said Mathis, referring to Public Law 15-94 that capped the electric billing at 17.6 cents per kilowatt-hour.

"This means they [residential customers] are not paying for the engines, no money for parts, no money for the men to run the engines or fix them…not paying for the guys who go into the field and fix power poles, restore high voltage lines, trim trees, not paying for vehicles, gas, parts, equipment or salaries," she said.

The CUC spokesperson explained that residential customers who use 1,000 kilowatt-hours or below per month pay nothing but fuel—and this creates huge losses at the utility agency.

The state of emergency, she said, allows the agency to come up with at least enough money to ensure that the Mobil tanker will deliver fuel.

"The money that the Department of Finance pays CUC in partial shortfalls is to basically subsidize residential customers and it comes from the government billing—or its future billing—severely affecting the cash flow of CUC, not to mention general fund. Where and how can a central government get funds for those who aren't paying for the real cost of energy?" Mathis said.

The state of emergency, she said, corrects bad legislation by providing a legal method for the government to assist the utility to pay for what the customers are not paying "but expense that are real and cannot and will not go away."

"Think of your pickup truck. If you buy gas for it but don't pay the bank loan, or for tires, or parts, you have no transportation," Mathis pointed out.

CUC, Mathis said, cannot provide power while customers pay for fuel only—the fuel goes into an engine that runs 24 hours a day and requires maintenance.

"The business and government sector are paying for non-fuel expense but their rates do not go up to cover the losses

See STATE on Next Page

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Saipan delegation defeats gaming plan

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Still another attempt to pass the Saipan gaming plan was defeated by the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation yesterday.

Saipan lawmakers voted 10-5 to kill a fresh local bill that would have legalized certain forms of gaming on the island.

House Local Bill 15-21, sponsored by Representatives Jesus SN Lizama and Oscar M. Babauta, proposed mainly to appropriate over $900,000 for Precinct II projects.

But riding on the bill was a section to allow video lottery terminals, as well as Texas Hold'em poker, black jack and baccarat games, to be operated at the former La Fiesta shopping mall.

It was the third such measure to be introduced in the Legislature since Saipan voters rejected the casino initiative in the November 2007 elections.

The first one was brought to the Legislature in the form of a House bill. The House of Representatives passed the bill, but the Senate killed it.

The second bill was introduced as a Saipan local bill last week. But the House on Friday rejected it as a local matter, amid legal issues. The Constitution states that only Commonwealth law may allow any form of gambling in the CNMI. This means gambling must be established either by a public law passed by both houses of the Legislature or by initiative.

The House action brought the bill back to the full House.

In yesterday's session, Saipan lawmakers who voted against the H.L.B. 15-21 echoed the constitutional concerns raised last Friday.

These lawmakers are SNILD Chairman Pete Reyes, Sen. Maria T. Pangelinan, Rep. Manuel Tenorio, Rep. Candido Taman, Rep. Justo Quitugua, Rep. Arnold Palacios, Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero, Rep. Cinta Kaipat, Rep. Ramon Tebuteb, and Rep. Benjamin Seman.

Meanwhile, SNILD members who voted in favor of the bill are Sen. Luis Crisostimo, Rep. Francisco Dela Cruz, Stanley T. Torres, and the two sponsors.

Tudela sends out 100 letters to businesses to save Wakai

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
REPORTER

The Saipan Mayor's Office is sending close to a hundred letters to businesses today requesting for funds or in-kind donations to save the Wakai Nekko No Kai from "sinking" its visits to the CNMI.

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela said they are also writing to the Japan-Saipan Travel Association requesting prizes for the raffle drawing on Jan. 23.

Mayor's Office public information officer Tony Benavente said they are also planning to ask the Saipan Walking Association, or SAIWAI, to donate 10 percent of their proceeds that they will collect from their Valentine's Day walkathon to the Wakai Nekko cause.

On Jan. 23, the "Friends of Wakai Nekko" are holding a golf tournament at the Coral Ocean Point. Community officials and alumni are encouraged to take part in the important cause.

The fee for the golf tournament will be $75, which includes the green fee, a banquet and raffles prizes, according to Benavente. Registrations for the golf tournament will end Jan. 21.

According to Benavente, COP will only accept checks. So interested individuals will have to make their checks payable to the Marianas Visitors Authority.

Interested individuals may contact Benavente at 234-6280 or MVA Martin Duenas at 664-3200.

Auto sales plunge 5.6 percent in December

By MARK RABAGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Vehicle sales in the CNMI dropped slightly in December 2006 to 5.26 percent, according to latest figures from the Commonwealth Auto Dealers Association.

A total of 54 units were driven off the showrooms and parking lots of the three automobile dealerships that make up CADA—Microl Corp., Triple J Motors, and Joeten Motors—last month.

The number represents a three-unit decline from the 57 sold in December 2006. Of the vehicles sold in the final month of 2006, 29 were cars, nine were trucks, four were vans, and 12 were sport utility vehicles.

Like previous months, CADA has again attributed the sales decline to the current economic crunch affecting the CNMI.

Microl Corp. continues to lord it over its two competitors when it comes to vehicle sales last month.

The Oleai dealership finished with a 48.15-percent market share after selling 26 units in December 2007. The 26—all consisting of Toyota units—represent a 3.7-percent decrease from the 27 units sold in December 2006.

Triple J Motors captured 29.63 percent of the vehicle market last month as it sold 16 units in December 2007. Mazda units led the way for Triple J Motors with six units sold, while five Hyundai and Mitsubishi makes each were snapped up in December 2007.

The 16 units Triple J Motors sold a month ago is a decrease of 11.11 percent from the same period last month, which saw the upper Garapan dealership sell 18 vehicles.

Joeten Motors sold 12 units last month, which represented a market share of 22.22 percent for auto dealerships in the CNMI.

The 12 cars sold by the Beach Road auto dealership last month is the same total sold in December 2006. The make of the 12 units sold by Joeten Motors last month is broken down as follows—six Nissan, three Honda, two Ford, and one Kia.

Microl Corp. sells Toyota and Chevrolet, while Joeten Motors sells Nissan, Ford, Honda, and Kia. Triple J Motors sells Hyundai, Mitsubishi, Isuzu, Suzuki, Subaru, and Mazda.

STATE

From Page 2

created by bad legislation that allows residential use of energy without paying the real cost," she said.

Mathis noted that majority of residential customers use about 600 kilowatt hours per month—so majority of residents are simply not paying for the real and true cost of producing energy.

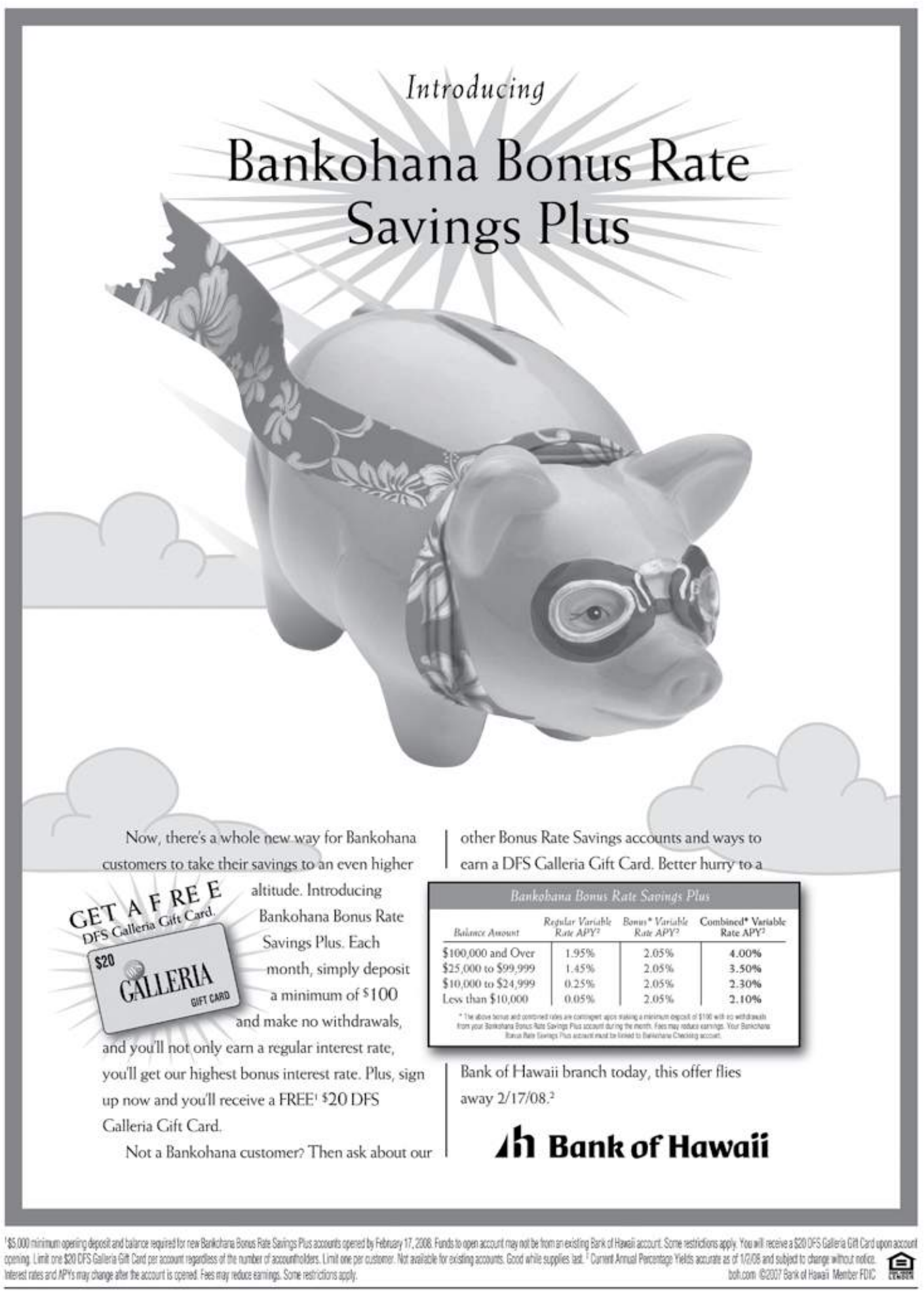
"Please remember that local and federal law/agreements dictate that the public utility reaches full cost recovery or passes to the customer the actual and real cost for both the generation and fuel that each individual customer uses (measured in kilowatt hours). This isn't happening due to P.L. 15-94 and this is why the state of emergency is highly necessary," she said.

Mathis said the emergency regulations (120 days) create the legal method for fluctuating the world fuel prices in the CUC electric fuel rate.

The electric fuel rate, she said, is set by the world price of fuel—as sold in Singapore to Mobil to the CNMI—now at $119 per barrel.

"CUC intends on promulgating these regulations as permanent," Mathis said.

CUC sets the fuel price on the first business day of each month.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Man busted for alleged 'ice' trafficking

The Attorney General's Office has filed eight charges against a man allegedly engaged in selling crystal methamphetamine or "ice" on Saipan.

Jian Teng Xu, also known as Mr. Li, 42, was charged with four counts of trafficking of a controlled substance and four counts of illegal possession of a controlled substance.

The prosecution alleged that Xu distributed "ice" on Dec. 6, 7, 11, and 17, 2007.

Xu has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

According to a member of the Drug Enforcement Task Force, using a "confidential source" they were able to buy $250 worth of "ice" from the defendant at a parking lot of a store in As Lito on Dec. 6.

The following day, an undercover Task Force agent was able to buy $250 worth of "ice" from Xu at a parking lot of the same store in As Lito.

On Dec. 11, the undercover agent purchased again $250 worth of "ice" from Xu at a parking lot of a store in Koblerville.

On Dec. 17, the Task Force members arrested Xu after he handed $500 worth of "ice" to an undercover agent at a parking lot of another store in Koblerville. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

DPH urges patients to make appointments

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Health Center's pediatric section is encouraging patients to call in and make appointments beforehand to ensure that they will be attended to immediately.

This came about after some patients complained about waiting yesterday morning, some of them for almost two hours.

Chair pediatrics Dr. Mike Seckeler said there are two doctors assigned to the section everyday but because he had to attend a meeting, Pediatrics had to work with only one doctor that morning.

Hence the need for people to make prior appointments, rather than just walking in "because if we have 60 patients come in at 7:30 in the morning and many of them are walk-ins, we can only do so much and we really don't want to turn anybody down," Seckeler said.

He added that, "We do let patients know approximately how long it will take until we see them so if it will take longer, they can go ahead and do some errands."

"We also give them the option to wait for their turn or to make an appointment for a later time," he added.

Calling in to schedule appointments is highly encouraged, Seckeler said. "It gives us more ability to accommodate patients."

Each doctor sees an average of 25 patients per day, Seckeler said.

15TH

From Page 1

need to discuss, and we do not have enough time to do that during this term," said Mendiola, who is also the chairman of the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs.

House Speaker Oscar M. Babauta said he is disappointed, but respects the senators' decision.

Babauta and the rest of the House hoped to see the budget passed before they adjourn sine die this Wednesday. They held a session last Saturday to ensure the budget was ready for Senate consideration by Monday.

Babauta raised concern that two new House members will be coming into the 16th Legislature without a budget. The size of the Lower House will increase from 18 to 20 members, pursuant to the court's reapportionment order issued last year.

"We wanted to fast-track passage of the budget. The Senate's decision is unfortunate. I respect it, but I hope they realize the importance of passing the budget as soon as possible," Babauta said.

The House-passed budget appropriates $168.771 million in resources to government operations. This excludes $3.03 million that will go to the Department of Public Lands, whose revenues are separate from the general fund.

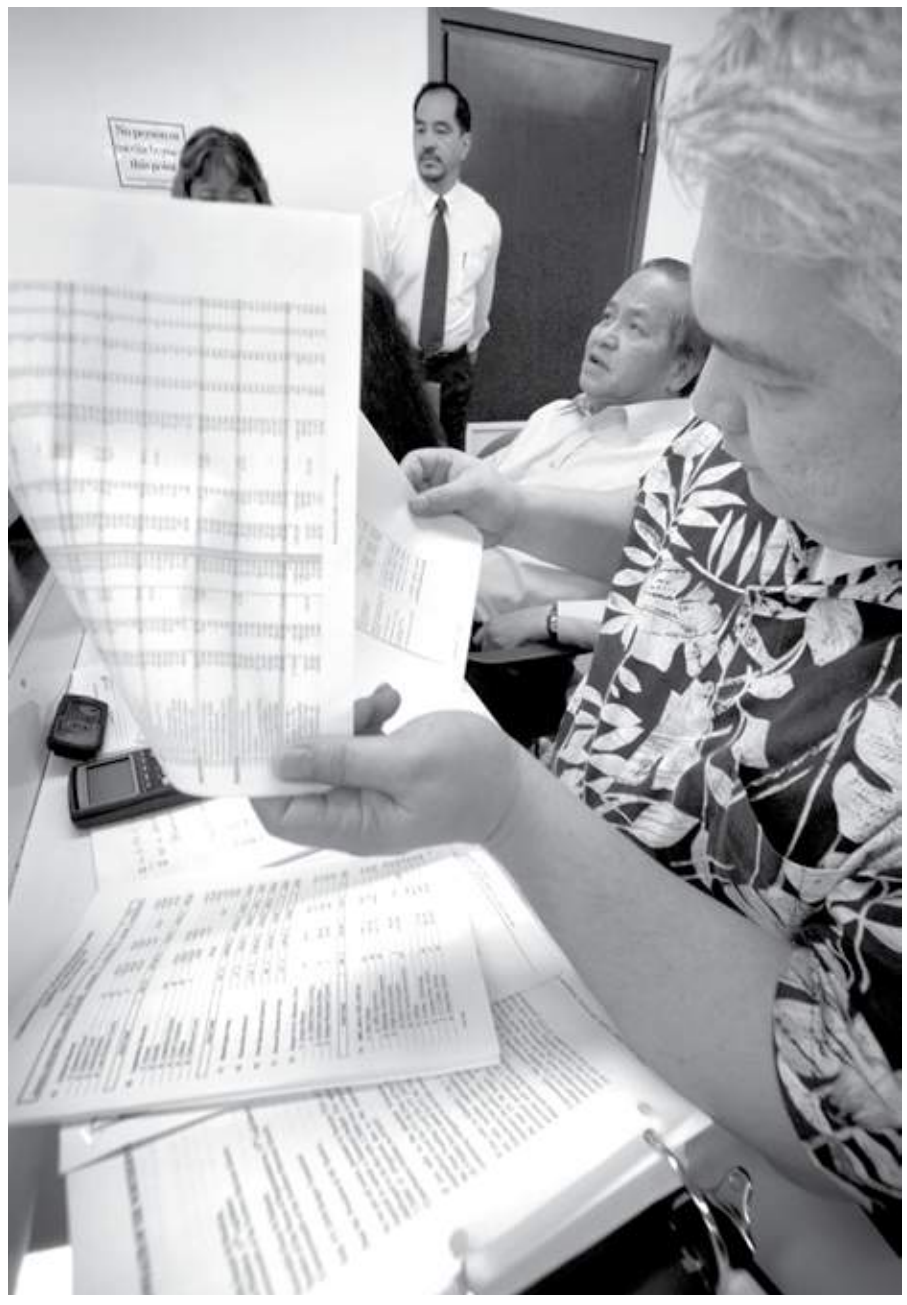
The budget prescribes an 18-percent retirement contribution rate for the central government, Public School System, and Northern Marianas College. The 36.7-percent rate determined by the actuarial study will apply to all other agencies.

The governor's other request, the suspension of holiday pay, is left out of the latest version of the budget bill.

The government projects total resources of $174.398 million in FY2008. This includes traditional revenues, as well as resources outside of the General Fund, such as $5.171 million in Compact Impact funding and $3.5 million from previously earmarked funds deemed available for reprogramming.

But only $168.771 million is available for appropriation for government activities. Of the difference, $3.030 million will go to the Department of Public Lands, $1.7 million to tobacco control programs, $2 million to solid waste management systems, and $450,000 to the deportation fund. Bond payments account for the $7.118 million balance.

The FY2008 budget will cover the period from Oct. 1, 2007 through Sept. 30, 2008.



Former governor's special assistant for management and budget Antonio Muna reviews the budget bill for fiscal year 2008 while Finance Secretary Eloy S. Inos talks to dignitaries during the bill presentation at the House of Representatives on Capital Hill Thursday.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

CHAMBER

From Page 1

force will be different. We all will be more reliant on a local workforce and today that is a big challenge for many businesses," he said during Saturday's Chamber installation dinner at Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall.

To this end the Chamber will take the lead in youth development—life skills and workforce preparation, said Arenovski, who is president of Delta Management Corp.

"Efforts to provide job and life skills to the students of the NMI need to begin immediately. In the latest SEDC meeting it was stated that close to 85 percent of our public high school seniors do not continue onto college off island. We as a business community need to develop and utilize that human resource, and business must be a part of that process," he said.

To emphasize this point, the 2008 Chamber president even referred to an old Chinese proverb: "…the best time to plant a tree…was 20 years ago; the second best time it NOW. This could be said for how we have educated our youth for the workforce. We cannot wait one more year, let alone 20…it is just too important."

Arenovski vowed that the Chamber's Education Committee, under the leadership of secretary Kathryn Barry, will continue to work with the schools to determine the best ways the organization can assist in preparing the CNMI's youth to enter the local workforce.

He added that the Commonwealth Employment Act of 2007 mandates local businesses to have more local employees integrated into its workforce, "but we will find this difficult if the applicants are unskilled, unprepared, and unmotivated."

To remedy this, Arenovski said the Chamber is planning to hold sessions wherein the local workforce will be trained in personal budgeting, interviewing skills, discussion about employer expectations, work ethics, and advancement.

"Hard discussions on starting at the bottom and moving up through a company; the balance of culture versus work; teamwork, customer service, and attitude will also be covered," he added.

Arenovski said the Chamber board is committed to initiating a grassroots program that will help students and those who are out of school but want to work prepared for the workforce.

"I envision working with WIA, Employment Services at DOL, ABE, NMC, and PSS," he said. "…we will not sit and wait, our local workforce needs to be developed starting now. I can see the tree being to take root. Help us by supporting us in this effort."

Aside from Arenovski and Barry, other Chamber officers installed Saturday were Harry Blalock, vice president; Michael S. Johnson, treasurer; and directors Doug A. Brennan, Steve K. Jang, Alex A. Sablan, David M. Sablan Sr., and John J. Santos.

The 2008 set of officers were sworn in by Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman.

$9M

From Page 1

a prorated amount of the $2.5 million expense.

With the consent of the U.S. Interior Department, another $6.5 million in capital improvement funds was reprogrammed for emergency power plant renovation.

Despite these emergency measures, however, critical CUC issues remain that require the involvement of the central government. The governor extended the state of emergency declaration for another 30 days beginning last Friday, Jan. 4, 2008.

Fitial noted that CUC remains in a negative cash flow situation. Fuel price hikes and legislative attempts to cut CUC's revenue generating ability do not help, he added.

The governor reiterated the previous administration's concern about the issue of fuel storage capacity and ownership.

"[This] must be addressed to ensure that the CNMI has the ability to minimize the duration and effect of the economic disruptions caused by high oil prices," he said.

He noted that previous contracts entered into by CUC have provided for exclusive use of storage facilities on Rota and Tinian for Mobil. He said this restricted CUC's ability to negotiate a long-term fuel supply contract with suppliers other than Mobil because such an agreement could not guarantee fuel to Rota and Tinian.

The governor reported that his administration had applied and received approval for a technical assistance grant from the Interior Department to provide funding for a feasibility study for a petroleum farm facility in the CNMI inclusive of all three major islands. JET Consulting Services had been hired to conduct the research project.

"Finally, I reiterate that the exercise of my constitutional and statutory authority to issue a state of disaster emergency declaration was accomplished in compliance with the law," Fitial said.

"The measures [taken] were critically needed and necessary to respond to the danger to public health and safety caused by the emergency situation faced by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and CUC. Furthermore, any funds reprogrammed or allocated to address the emergency situation have been spent in a fiscally responsible manner…," he added.

The state of emergency declaration allows the governor to assume full control of CUC and suspend all regulatory statute provisions and regulations applicable to CUC, including procurement regulations. The governor will also have the power to reprogram all available funds to address CUC's problems.

Only $1.2M allocated for Saipan employees

Saipan lawmakers have appropriated barely half of what is needed to save the jobs of Saipan employees affected by planned government furlough.

The Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation passed yesterday House Local Bill 15-19, earmarking $1.2 million in projected local poker fees for the salaries of Saipan employees who were furloughed effective Dec. 22, 2007.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial had said earlier that the government needed $2.5 million keep employing the 157 Saipan workers through Sept. 30, 2007.

"Unfortunately, we found that funding is not sufficient to cover all of them," said Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero, author of the bill. "But this appropriation will provide immediate relief. It will help keep people employed, if not for the whole year, then at least part of it."

He also expressed hope that Saipan would raise additional revenues before the money runs out again.

All of the 18 other Saipan delegates co-sponsored the appropriation bill.

The measure will become law once signed by the governor. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

'Relative may redeem Sablan's auctioned property'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
REPORTER

The Superior Court has ruled that a relative of former Pacific Gardenia owner Ronald S. Sablan may redeem from the buyers of Sablan's land a piece of property that was sold pursuant to a court order.

Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona ordered that the redemption amount is $85,600 based upon the purchase price of $80,000 plus interest of 1 percent per month from the June 5, 2007 date of sale.

Manglona said petitioner/redemptioner Antonio A. Sablan has deposited $81,200 with the court.

The judge said that prior to redemption and no later than 10 days following the date of this order, Antonio Sablan shall further deposit $4,400 with the clerk of court.

She directed Antonio Sablan to prepare a certificate of redemption for the real property and submit it to purchasers Del Ariel Benson, Karen Benson, and Carlene Atalig Mitchell for their signatures.

Upon the purchasers' filing with the Clerk of Court of a Certificate of Redemption, Manglona said, the Clerk of Court shall transfer the full redemption amount to the buyers.

The judge said although the respective arguments presented by Antonio Sablan and the responding purchasers raise a number of issues that significantly concern the prior proceedings, the question actually presented is a narrow one: "Is the judgment debtor in this case permitted to assign his statutory redemption right to a third party after the sale of the property, but before the statutory period of redemption expires, thus allowing the third party to redeem the property from the purchasers in his place?"

Manglona concluded that Ronald Sablan as judgment debtor "may assign his interest and that the assignment in this case is valid."

According to court records, Ronald Sablan and his wife, Maria Ana T. Sablan, jointly obtained a $60,605.82 loan from Pacific Financial Corp. in 1992. The loan was secured by a mortgage on the couple's improved real property located in Chalan Kanoa and in Fina Sisu, Saipan.

In 1993, the Sablans executed and recorded a 55-year lease of a portion of the Fina Sisu property to Sy's Corp. In 1994, the mortgage was partially released as to Lot 008 H 39, the Chalan Kanoa property.

In March 1995, the CNMI Division of Revenue and Taxation recorded nine notices of tax liens on the property for the total amount of $141,193.31 against Sy's Corp. and $619,758.87 against Ronald Sablan, then owner of Pacific Gardenia Hotel.

In 1996, the Sablans obtained a second mortgage on the property to secure a loan of $20,200 from the Bank of Saipan. Two years later, the Sablans executed three additional mortgages with the Bank of Saipan to secure loans totaling $946,476.34.

In 2003, the CNMI recorded additional tax liens against Sy's Corp. that totaled $2,287,055.91.

By April of 2001, the Sablans were in default of their obligations under the 1992 mortgage with PFC.

PFC filed the lawsuit to recover $69,205.73 in unpaid principal, interest on $57,816.08 of the principal from April 16, 2001, and for the sale of the property to satisfy the debt.

In July 2002, PFC assigned all of its interest under the 1992 promissory note and mortgage to Pacific Asset Management Corp.

The court granted the plaintiff's motion for judgment by default.

Pursuant to the May 27, 2005 default judgment, the property was placed on the market for sale. The first attempt garnered insufficient bids. The property was sold on the second attempt on June 5, 2007, for the highest bid of $80,000.

The purchasers were Del Ariel Benson and Karen Benson, who intend to take a 55-year lease of the property, and Carlene Atalig Mitchell, who plans to acquire the title in fee.

The court approved the sale on July 9, 2007, entering a deficiency judgment of $44,514.36 against the defendants and in favor of PAM.

In July 2007, Ronald Sablan executed an assignment of Redemption Rights purporting to convey his right to redemption to his relative, Antonio A. Sablan, who is living in Guam. Antonio Sablan petitioned the court for approval of his exercise of redemption and tendered the proposed redemption price of $81,200 to the clerk of the court pursuant to the statute.

The purchasers opposed the petition, contending that the assignment is invalid and contrary to statute.

In her order, Manglona said the right of a mortgagor to redeem the mortgaged property following a foreclosure sale is purely statutory.

The CNMI's Real Estate Mortgage Law, Manglona said, provides that real property sold by judicial foreclosure may be redeemed within one year of the sale "by the judgment debtor or a successor in interest" by paying the purchaser the purchase price, plus 1 percent per month interest, and upon paying specific interim costs of the purchaser, if any.

"If the judgment debtor and the purchaser cannot agree on the proper redemption price, the statute allows the judgment debtor to petition the court to determine the proper amount," she said.

The purchasers in this proceeding, the judge said, have raised no objections to the amount tendered, but object generally that the assignment of the judgment debtor's right to redemption is not permitted by the statute and that the purported assignment is void as having been made with the intent to defraud the purchasers and the junior encumbrances.

MODEL BEHAVIOR
Ariel Sinclair shares with the contestants her experience as a model during a Miss Marianas Teen briefing held Saturday at the Hard Rock Café. Sinclair has done posters for Coca-Cola and the Elite Modeling Agency based in California.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Camaraderie built even in the battleground

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
REPORTER

Lt. Col. Ed Camacho arrived just in time for the holidays after serving one year in Iraq.

Camacho, who has served 26 years in the Army, said he kissed the ground when he finally returned home to Saipan.

Camacho described the atmosphere in Iraq as "hell." Camacho said he cannot go into detail as to what he saw and what he and his fellow servicemen went through while in Iraq, but what he did share was that, "even though it was like hell over there, it was a great opportunity."

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Lt. Col. Ed Camacho, right, and Sgt. Sonny Sablan, left, talk with a retiree during the TRICARE briefing held at the Army Reserve Center in Puerto Rico Saturday morning.

Serving a year in Iraq has given Camacho a new appreciation of the meaning of life, he said. "You learn to appreciate even the smallest things in life and you learn to value your life," Camacho said.

Serving time in Iraq has made Camacho appreciate even the smallest things. He remembered the time when he arrived at the Houston Airport.

"The people really welcomed us over there," he said. "I remember one woman was holding her baby and she handed her baby to me to hold. At that moment, I also remembered what it is I'm fighting for. I remembered why I chose to join the Army."

During their time in Iraq, Sgt. Sonny Sablan and Camacho both said strong ties and camaraderie is formed within the group. "We become more than just friends. We become family," Camacho said.

"Folks from other places in the United States, when they see us, they want to hang with us because we're all so very close," Camacho said.

"Even in somewhere like Iraq, we find reasons to celebrate for us and for each other," Sablan added.

"When one of our guys' wife is pregnant, we celebrate. When we learn that our kids have teeth coming in, we celebrate. Heck, even when it's month number four, we celebrate! We basically find just about any reason to celebrate," Sablan said.

Camacho said that CNMI soldiers have established friendship with people from Iraq. "Not all people in Iraq are bad people. We actually make friends with a lot of them," Camacho said, adding that Iraqi children would visit the American soldiers from time to time.

"A lot of them want to learn English, so we teach them," Camacho said.

When asked what they are doing now that they are both home, Camacho said, "We're getting ready for another mission. When we aren't at a mission, we're definitely getting ready for one."

"There is always another mission," Sablan chimed in.

Both Sablan and Camacho said they would not trade their experience in Iraq for anything in the world.

Sgt. Sonny Sablan has been in the Army reserves for six years and counting. Lt Col. Ed Camacho has been in active duty for 26 years and counting.

When asked if he were to retire soon, Camacho said, "I can't. I love I what I do."

Songsong to join renowned honor society

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
REPORTER

As a result of her outstanding academic performance, CNMI resident Sherriann M. Sonsong has been qualified to become a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society.

The Golden Key International Honour Society is the premiere worldwide by-invitation-only collegiate honor society.

Songsong, who celebrated her birthday yesterday, is a 2005 graduate of Marianas High School and is now a junior at the California State University in San Marcos. She is the daughter of proud parents Joe and Angelina Songsong.

According to Golden Key International Honour Society chief executive officer Alexander D. Perwich, Songsong's "exceptional academic achievement has qualified her to be among the select group of top-performing students eligible for induction this year."

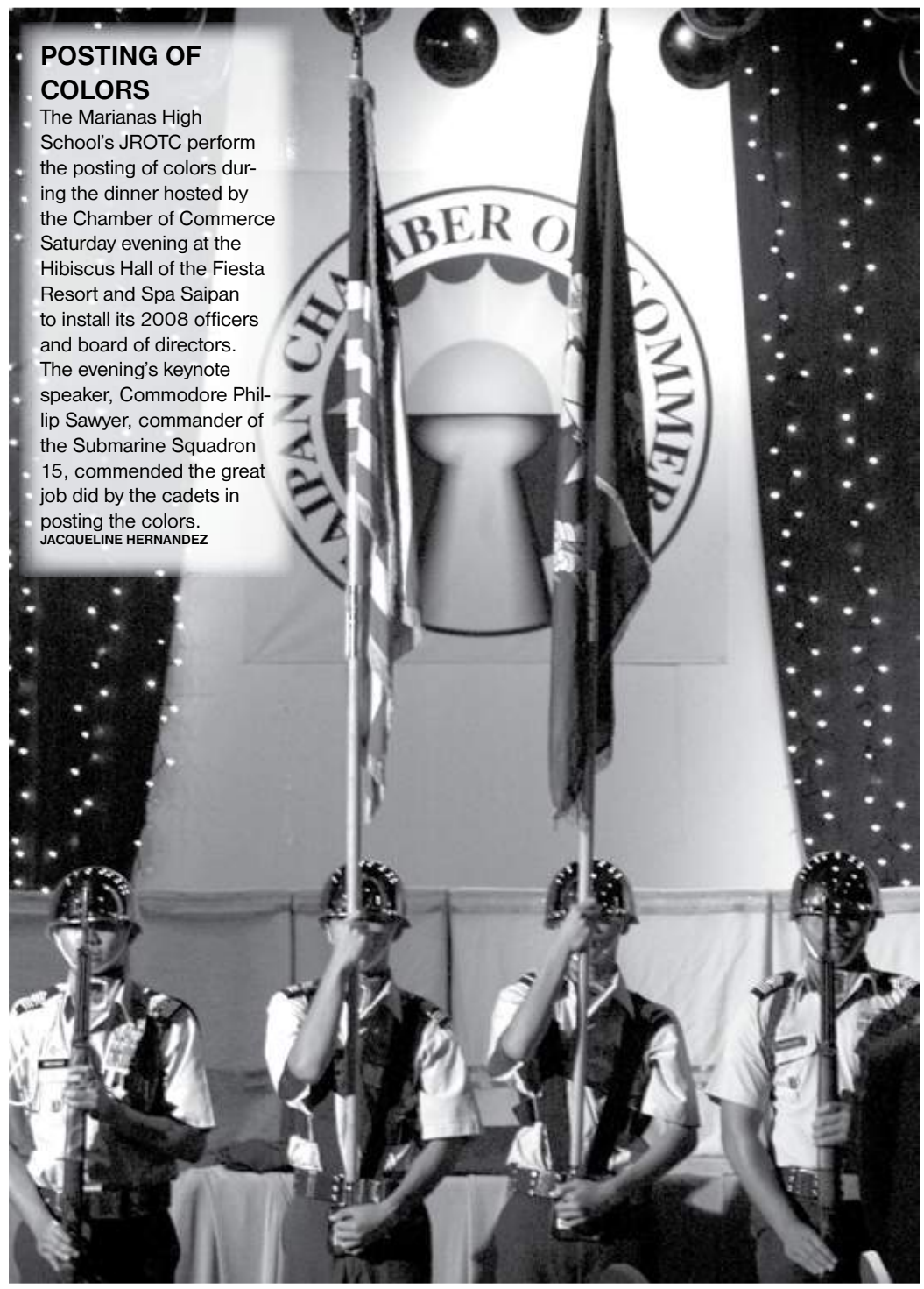
Songsong

Perwich extended Songsong a personal invitation to join "our community of high-achieving individuals from around the world and to become a member in good standing of our society, with full privileges and benefits."

Accepting this exclusive invitation of membership, Perwich said, completes the recognition of outstanding academic performance and is an opportunity for Songsong to join an exclusive community of more than 1.7 million other high-achieving individuals from over 350 Golden Key chapters around the world.

Founded in 1077, Golden Key is recognized and respected by colleges, universities, major corporations and other organizations around the globe. Because of who they are, Golden Key members are highly regarded and sought after by many prestigious employers and institutions.

Honorary members include such notable personalities as President William J. Clinton, Secretary of State Colin E. Powell, leadership consultant and author Stephen Covey, entertainer Bill Cosby, and even the Most Reverend Bishop Desmond M. Tutu.



POSTING OF COLORS
The Marianas High School's JROTC perform the posting of colors during the dinner hosted by the Chamber of Commerce Saturday evening at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan to install its 2008 officers and board of directors. The evening's keynote speaker, Commodore Phillip Sawyer, commander of the Submarine Squadron 15, commended the great job did by the cadets in posting the colors.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Campaign on to raise awareness of cervical cancer

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
REPORTER

The Saipan Mayor's Office, in collaboration with the CNMI Department of Public Health and the Commonwealth Cancer Association, will declare Jan. 13-26 as 2008 Cervical Cancer Awareness Weeks.

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela will endorse the fight against cervical cancer on Wednesday morning, Jan. 13, along with Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez. Rep. Benjamin Seman, who is also president of the Commonwealth Cancer Association, was also invited to the proclamation signing.

Tudela said DPH has activities lined up in observance of the awareness campaign.

The cervical cancer death rate in the CNMI is six times higher than the U.S. national average. Cancer is also the second leading cause of death for both males and females in the CNMI.

These staggering facts, according to Villagomez, emphasizes the importance of the new human pappillomavirus vaccine.

"By vaccinating our high school girls through this campaign, it is estimated that about 50 new cases of cervical cancer will be prevented in the future," Villagomez said.

Three doses are necessary to complete the vaccine series.

On Dec. 10, 2007, DPH started administering their second dose of the HPV vaccine to female students in high schools in the CNMI.

All 14 high schools were visited by DPH and 1,311, or 74 percent of the female student population were vaccinated during the first round of vaccinations.

Although the vaccine is recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to be administered to girls in the sixth grade, DPH's free vaccination campaign is targeted toward girls who are in the high school level. The third and final dose will be provided in April 2008.

Though the second dose has already begun to be administered at the schools, any student who failed to get her first HPV dose can still get her first shot while the second dose is being administered at school.

Any student who missed their first doe of vaccination can visit the Southern Wellness Community Center in San Antonio or any other private clinic on Saipan to acquire her first dose.

"The free vaccine is also available for girls 18 and under who are not in school. Girls under the age of 18 must have written consent from her parents or guardian to receive the vaccine," Villagomez said.

The HPV vaccination campaign aims to reduce the rate of cervical cancer in the CNMI.

According to Tudela, this is the second year that Saipan will observe the important awareness campaign.

Math placement test to go on today

Although the Northern Marianas College campus will be closed today, Jan. 8, 2008, for assessment training, the Math Placement Test scheduled for this day will proceed from 10am to 12pm, in Room D-1.

However, the placement test for the Adult Basic Education Program, also scheduled for today, has been canceled. ABE placements tests will resume on Jan. 9, 10, and 11, from 1pm to 5pm, in Room K-1.

As earlier reported, NMC students and all staff and faculty will be participating in a training seminar today as part of the college's efforts to meet standards of accreditation regarding assessment and program review.

To ensure maximum participation, the NMC campus will be closed (with the exception of the administration of the Math placement test) and will resume normal business tomorrow, Jan. 9, 2008. ***(NMC)***

Helicopter evacuates stroke victim at sea

SANTA RITA, Guam—Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 assisted yesterday in the medical evacuation of a 60-year-old female Japanese national who was believed to have suffered from a stroke Jan. 6 onboard a cruise ship.

A MH-60S helicopter was launched from the squadron located on Andersen Air Force Base at approximately 5:35am. The helicopter arrived at the scene 35 nautical miles southwest of Guam at 6am. The crew hoisted a search-and-rescue swimmer and SAR corpsman to assess and stabilize the patient.

Once it was determined the woman was able to be evacuated, Navy personnel lifted the patient onto the helicopter and transported her to U.S. Naval Hospital Guam. The crew and patient arrived at the hospital at approximately 7am.

The patient was stabilized at Naval Hospital Guam and transported to Japan for further treatment and evaluation. ***(USN)***

SURFING IN THE NMI

Overlooking the beautiful island of Managaha a lady windsurfer takes advantage of the gusting wind on Micro Beach yesterday afternoon.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Comments sought for release of insects in NMI and Guam

A division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments from the public on the release of a non-indigenous insect to help control the growth of the giant sensitive plant on the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine Division is making available to the public the environmental assessment for the release of *Heteropsylla spinulosa* (Homoptera: Psyllidae) for the biological control of the Giant Sensitive Plant, or *Mimosa diplotricha* (Mimosaceae).

The bio-control release is under a permit from the USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The environmental assessment is available online at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/ and http://www.wptrc.org/article.asp?artID=93.

Persons wishing to comment on the document should send them to:

Dr. G.V.P. Reddy
Agricultural Experiment Station
College of Natural and Applied Sciences
University of Guam, Mangilao, Guam 96923,
Email:reddy@guam.uog.edu, tel: 735-2142; or

Dr. Jack Tenorio
Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus
P.O. Box 501250, Saipan, MP 96950
E-mail: jtenorio39@yahoo.com, tel: 234-5498 ext. 1432; or

Dr. Robert S. Johnson
USDA, APHIS
APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine
4700 River Road, Unit 133 Riverdale, MD 20737

Persons wishing to comment on the document should send them to the same address by Feb. 10, 2008. ***(CREES)***

NMC alumni meeting Jan. 10

Graduates and former students of the Northern Marianas College are invited to participate in the establishment of the NMC Alumni Association.

The NMC Alumni Association will be involved in organizing several community events that promote the College's mission, including pursuing professional development opportunities for NMC alumni, organizing large-scale events for scholarship fundraising, and networking opportunities.

The general meeting for all NMC alumni (those who have graduated with NMC degrees or those who have earned at least 24 NMC academic credits) will be held at 6pm on Jan. 10, 2008, at the Student Center Bldg. J. Officers will be elected at this meeting.

NMC alumni who are able to attend the inaugural meeting will qualify for a free waiver for one transcript request. Refreshments will also be provided. ***(NMC)***

Live fire training, survey at FDM

The Emergency Management Office and U.S. Naval Forces Marianas said that the U.S. military would be conducting live fire training and aerial survey on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla.

The schedule dates and time are as follow:

Jan. 8 – 9, from 10am to 7pm live fire training

Jan. 10 – 12, from 12am to 11:59pm aerial survey

The general location of these activities will be on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla Training Area on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants.

Due to the danger imposed by these activities, EMO is strongly advising the general public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—to stay away from this area during the time and dates indicated.

For more information, contact the EMO's Operations Section at telephone numbers 322-9528 and 322-9529, VHF MARINE CHNL 16, and HF Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0. ***(EMO)***

TENTH CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC NOTICE AND CORRECTION

A Monday January 7, 2008 Public Notice should have stated that an Inaugural Program of the State Board of Education will be held on Monday January 14, 2008, 8:30 a.m. at the Multi-Purpose Center, not at the BOE Conference Room, as previously advertised. A Regular Eleventh CNMI State Board of Education Meeting will take place at a later date to be announced.

INAUGURAL PROGRAM
Monday, January 14, 2008
8:30 a.m. at the Multi-Purpose Center
Susupe, Saipan, MP

POSTING OF COLORS
CNMI AND NATIONAL ANTHEM
INVOCATION
OPENING REMARKS

RECOGNITION OF INCOMING BOE MEMBERS
Lucia Blanco-Maratita, BOE Member

Mary Lou Ada
Galvin Guerrero
D. Tanya King

OATH OF OFFICE
Honorable Alejandro Castro
Associate Justice, CNMI Supreme Court

SPECIAL REMARKS OF INCOMING BOE MEMBERS
Mary Lou Ada
Galvin Guerrero
D. Tanya King

BENEDICTION
Scott L. Norman, BOE Non-Public Representative

ADJOURNMENT

RETIREMENT OF COLORS

INTERESTED PERSONS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND AND TO SUBMIT WRITTEN OR ORAL COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE ITEMS.

For more information, contact the COE's Office at Tel. No. 237-3002 or Fax No. 664-3798.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-014

The CNMI Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the **Supply, Delivery, and Installation of Accordion Type Aluminum Typhoon Shutters for Various PSS Head Start Centers located throughout the CNMI**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-014" containing (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than February 8, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-014, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and one copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl Dela Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**.

Contractors are required to submit with their bid, a copy of their valid CNMI business license.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. Dela Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P & S Officer

Tomeing is new Marshalls president

SUVA, Fiji (AP)—Lawmakers elected Litokwa Tomeing as president of the Marshall Islands on Monday, a move that could end the South Pacific nation's diplomatic recognition of Taiwan.

Former Speaker Tomeing beat two-term President Kessai Note by 18 votes to 15, chief electoral officer Carl Alik said.

The Nitijela, the Marshalls' parliament, also elected Jurelang Zedkaia as speaker and Alik Alik as his deputy, Carl Alik said.

The Marshalls' general elections in November were marked by controversy and recounts.

Before the poll, Tomeing defected from the left-leaning United Democratic Party to the conservative United People's Party. After the vote, the UPP formed a coalition with the main opposition Aelon Kein Ad (Our Islands) party to oust the UDP, which had ruled since 2000.

Tomeing had vowed to end the Marshalls' diplomatic recognition of Taiwan and adhere to the "one China" policy that identifies the island as Chinese territory. Taiwanese officials have accused China of interfering in the Marshalls' elections by funneling money through local businessmen to opposition candidates.

Taiwanese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Phoebe Yeh insisted Monday that Tomeing was committed to maintaining ties with Taiwan despite his previous pledge to switch to Beijing.

"Tomeing said repeatedly after being elected as a member of parliament in December that the Marshall Islands should keep ties with Taiwan," she said in Taipei. "Taiwan's ties with Marshall Islands remain unchanged."

Taiwan and China split amid civil war in 1949. The two sides have since been engaged in an all-out contest to win the diplomatic allegiance of nations around the world.

In recent years, China's rising political and economic clout has helped it persuade more countries to recognize Beijing instead of Taipei, reducing the number of Taiwan's allies to only 24—most of them small and impoverished nations in Latin America, Africa and the South Pacific.

About 62,000 people live in the Marshall Islands, which became independent in 1986 after being administered by the United States.

Tomeing is only the fourth elected head of state since the republic was founded. Tomeing and Zedkaia are both tribal chiefs.

Taiwan says its ties with Marshalls is unchanged

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan's ties with the Marshall Islands have not changed, despite the election of a pro-China candidate as the South Pacific nation's president, Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said Monday.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Phoebe Yeh's comments came as Taiwan continued to reel over ally Malawi's decision last week not to receive Foreign Minister James Huang, who had hoped to shore up Taiwan's diplomatic support in the face of efforts by China to get Malawi to switch recognition.

Taiwan and China split amid civil war in 1949. The two sides have since been engaged in a contest to win the diplomatic allegiance of nations around the world.

Yeh said Marshall Islands President-elect Litokwa Tomeing was committed to maintaining ties with Taiwan, despite his previous pledge to switch to Beijing.

"Tomeing said repeatedly after being elected as a member of parliament in December that the Marshall Islands should keep ties with Taiwan," she said. "Taiwan's ties with Marshall Islands remain unchanged."

In recent years, China's rising political and economic clout has helped it persuade more countries to recognize Beijing instead of Taipei, reducing the number of Taiwan's allies to only 24—most of them small and impoverished nations in Latin America, Africa and the South Pacific.

Tomeing beat former two-term President Kessai Note by 18 votes to 15 in the Marshall Islands parliament Monday to become the new leader of the country. In the Marshalls, the head of state is elected by the parliament.

ANGELO VILLAGOMEZ

GARAPAN CLEANUP

Volunteers from CNMI Power pose next to their pickup after their monthly cleanup of Garapan. Their January cleanup was the twelfth consecutive months of cleaning up Garapan.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Russian navy to join Pacific Rim exercises

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—For the first time, Russia will join foreign and U.S. warships participating in the largest naval exercise in the world. The Rim of the Pacific exercise is held every two years in Hawaii. The Honolulu Star Bulletin reports that the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, Admiral Robert Willard, says the Russian navy will join the estimated three dozen warships from 11 nations in this year's exercise. The other foreign navies participating this year have not been announced.

A. Samoa taps retirement fund for festival

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—The government in American Samoa has increased its monetary contribution to the 10th Pacific Arts Festival organizing committee. The committee announced last year that the government was contributing US$1.5 million to assist with preparation of the festival, which runs from July 20-Aug 2. However, the governor has informed the Fono leadership that the government's contribution has increased by $1 million to $2.5 million. According to the governor $1.5 million is to assist with logistics, such as accommodation and transportation and the extra $1 million to fund the food voucher program to feed the expected 2,000 participants. The government's contribution is funded under the $20 million loan it received from the government Employees Retirement Fund.

Gas jumps by 53 cents a gallon in Solomons

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Solomon Times/PIR)—The price of fuel has reached an all time high with motorists having to pay an extra SB$1 per litre of fuel [53 US cents per gallon]. "I am thinking seriously whether it is worth holding on to the vehicle," stated one frustrated motorist as she was queuing up for fuel. "It seems that the price of fuel is rising far more frequently now compared to previous years; SB$7.91 for a litre of fuel [US$4.27 per gallon] is just too much." Bus owners and taxi drivers have also complained that the price hike will eat into their daily takings. "I think it would be good if we increase our fares, if not then we will be making huge losses," stated one bus driver. "It is getting very difficult for us, and the government should look at our plight."

Vanuatu expects tourism increase in 2008

PORT VILA, Vanuatu (Capitol FM107 News/PIR)—Apart from Port Vila, Mystery Island in the southern Province of Vanuatu is expecting more visitors as of January of 2008. This has been revealed by Joe Iauto in the Marketing Section of the Vanuatu National Tourism Office when contacted by Capitol FM News this week. Iauto said the arrival of the new ocean liner "Pacific Dawn" contributes to the high number of visitors coming to Vanuatu. He also confirmed that apart from other tourist destination sites in Vanuatu, Mystery Island is expecting more visitors, as it has been voted by the P&O Cruise as the best Tourist Destination in the region. In the month of January alone, around 10 cruise ships will be visiting Vanuatu.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

JANUARY 8, 2001

Wiseman named Superior Court judge

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has nominated prominent lawyer David A. Wiseman to the Superior Court to fill a vacancy following the appointment last year of Justice John A. Manglona to the Supreme Court. The governor submitted his name last Thursday to the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations for his confirmation.

CPA backs economic revitalization plan

The Commonwealth Ports Authority strongly supports the economic revitalization plan of the CNMI government, as it ensured cooperation so long as the agency's capability to meet its debt requirements is not compromised. Board Chair Roman S. Palacios said a detailed analysis of the ports authority's projected revenues and expenditures was specifically made to determine whether CPA can heed to calls for lower airport charges.

Private health providers eyed to handle GHLI

Legislators will ask members of the Health Commission for suggestions on how to resolve the unpaid debt of the Government Health Insurance as they raised the possibility of allowing a private health provider to handle the program temporarily. Rep. Malua Peter, chair of the House Committee on Health and Welfare, has expressed concern on the liability which the government will face in case of a possible lawsuit from a GHLI member.

JANUARY 8, 2002

Teachers, parents discuss proper childcare

The Public School System and the Department of Public Health yesterday gathered teachers and parents throughout the island for a whole-day conference on early childhood care that was presented by the HeadStart Program. The Second Annual Health Symposium, "Show you care, Stay Healthy, Live Healthy" seminar, which was held at the Saipan Diamond Hotel, gathered education and medical experts in presenting a variety of techniques on childcare.

'Changes in Senate leadership unlikely'

Sen. Joaquin G. Adriano yesterday branded as "bogus" earlier reports that senator-elect Diego M. Songao and Sen. Ramon Guerrero will be joining the Republican Party to ensure a GOP-controlled Senate in the 13th Legislature. Adriano insisted that the original composition of the 13th Senate leadership is still intact "and that it's going to remain like that. There are no changes."

Saipan hosts business confab for Japanese firm

The Marianas Visitors Authority welcomed 914 officials and employees of Japan-based anti-pest control firm Asante Company Limited, who arrived on Saipan for a five-day business conference this week. In a dinner party held Sunday night at the Diamond Hotel, MVA Managing Director Perry Tenorio expressed appreciation to company executives for choosing Saipan as the venue for its annual business meeting this year.

JANUARY 8, 2003

'Depoliticize work-hour reduction'

Government employees who may have to bear reduced work hours due to a proposed across-the-board personnel reduction plan should view the situation as an opportunity to share. So said Sen. Ramon S. Guerrero, who expressed disappointment yesterday that the proposed measure to reduce man-hours in the government was defeated in the House of Representatives Monday.

Bill to privatize GHLI offered

The Babauta administration has sent to the Legislature a legislative proposal envisioned to turn the current government health insurance program into a reliable and affordable system that will serve government officials, employees and their qualified dependents, as well as retirees and survivors. Rep. Daniel O. Quitugua sponsored the legislative measure--now House Bill 13-243--which he introduced on the House floor during a session Monday.

Island Snapshots

CRIME STOPPERS CHIEF
NMI Crime Stoppers Program board chair Jim Arenovski delivers his remarks while Gov. Benigno R. Fitial listen during Thursday's proclamation signing declaring January as NMI Crime Stoppers Month on Capital Hill.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

DFS DONATION
DFS Saipan Limited employees collected four boxes of canned goods and other nonperishable items during the holiday season and donated them to the Salvation Army. Shown in the picture are Gemma Good (TM manager); Marian Pierce (DFS president) and Marida Pensader (Operations support manager) turning over the donations to Wayne Gillespie of The Salvation Army.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BASULA PRODUKTO RAFFLE WINNERS
Taken on Jan. 5, 2008, Saturday at 4:30pm, this picture shows Basula Produkto president Eric A. Cruz announcing the winner's name during the Basula Produkto Year-End Promo Raffle Draw from the invoice that served as their raffle ticket. The winners are: first prize for $300, Invoice No. EM-31424; second prize for $200, Invoice No. EM-31476; third prize for $100, Invoice No. EM-31760; fourth prize for $50, Invoice No. EM-31768; and fifth prize for $25, Invoice No. EM-31477.

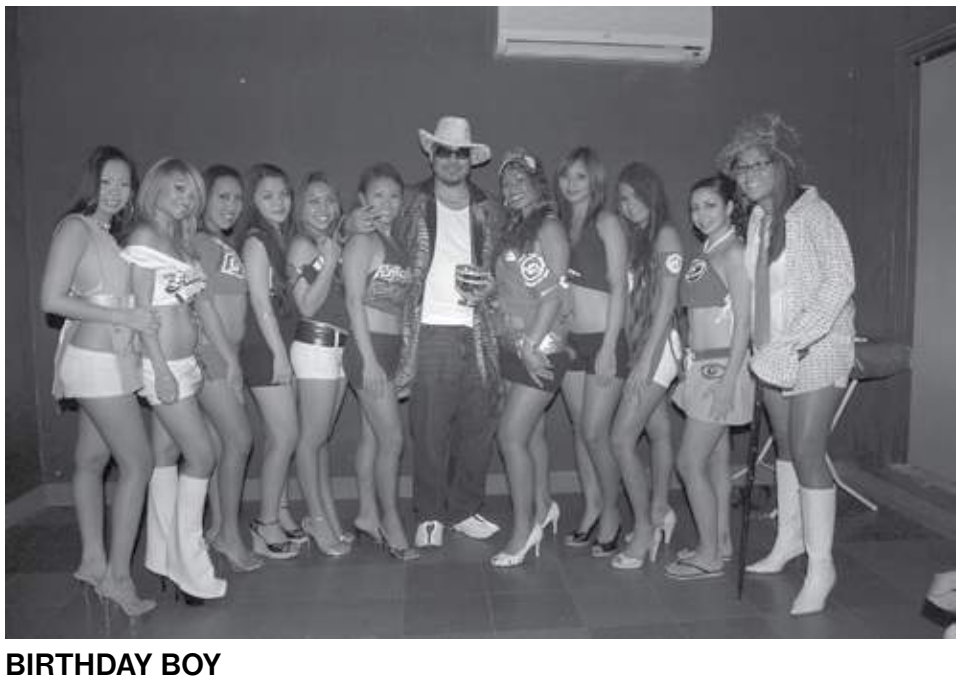
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TRICARE BRIEFING
TRICARE informational materials are displayed while TRICARE marketing representative Paula Shelton talks to reservists, retirees, survivors and family members during a program briefing at the Professional Building at the Army Reserve Center in Puerto Rico Saturday morning.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

HOUSE SESSION
Representatives gather for a session at the House Chamber on Capital Hill Friday.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



BIRTHDAY BOY
Fotten Ga'ga' owner Dex Mendiola poses with the Fotten Ga'ga' girls at his recent birthday party and fashion show at Ocean's.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FLAME TREE ADVOCATE
Beautify CNMI volunteer EJ Lee stand next to one of the Flame Trees planted along Beach Road six months ago. Beautify CNMI has plans to continue plantING trees in 2008 with the onset of the rainy season.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

First aid for Kenya

The international community flunked its first genocide prevention test in Rwanda. It failed again in Darfur. Now comes another chance at redemption—in Kenya, where, mercifully, there is still time and opportunity to keep one of the few peaceful, stable and prospering countries in Africa from jumping over the precipice of ethnic warfare. It will require a swift and concerted effort to help the Kenyan people and institutions eager to save their own nation. It can still be done, but only if we learn the lessons of ethnic cleansings past: The longer the killing goes on, the harder it will be to stop the cycle of atrocities and revenge.

Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu flew to Nairobi on Tuesday to try to mediate the conflict between Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, who had himself sworn in for a second term two hours after a blatantly flawed election was abruptly decided in his favor, and his rival, Raila Odinga, leader of the Orange Democratic Movement. Odinga met with Tutu and has called for an end to the violence, but Kibaki refused to see the archbishop on the grounds that Kenya is not in civil war. On Thursday, Kibaki said, again unhelpfully, that he would talk to his opposition once the nation is calm.

The African Union's chairman, John Kufuor, the president of Ghana, offered to fly to Kenya as well, only to have Kibaki's spokesman say that AU intervention wasn't necessary to deal with an internal Kenyan matter. Kibaki needs reminding that the U.N. Security Council, with Kenyan assent, in 2006 recognized that national sovereignty is trumped by the duty of the international community to intervene when governments are "manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."

Until now, Kenya has done a far better job than most African nations in managing its many ethnic divisions. It has strong human rights groups and traditions that ought to prevent the kind of genocidal madness that struck Rwanda. But Kibaki, who came into office as a reformer promising to reverse the decades of corruption, decay and ethnic favoritism of strongman Daniel Arap Moi, has proved a grave disappointment. He has, however, been one of Africa's best U.S. allies in combating terrorism, and he receives nearly $800 million in international aid. The United States and Britain, both key trading partners for Kenya, should use that leverage now to force Kibaki to negotiate a power-sharing deal and help pull his country back from the brink.

(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times

Hakuna Matata

Yan can Cook

I saw that our local newspaper printed an announcement transcribed in three languages the other day. The article describes the Zoning Law training classes available to the public written in Japanese, Chinese and English. It makes me wonder if they hired the services of the same translator used by Chinese factories to describe "how to" information in owner's manuals of many China-made products. If so, when Mandarin speakers read the characters printed in the message, it might sound to them something like this:

Wistfully requiring attendance to the smiling home to built or sign changing. On repairing moon washed Multi-Purpose Center needed only come to see, then finding cement and Adult Business presents.

Please to secure arriving in January toward the 8th day including 8:30am atop 11:30am. Now may experience feeling enlightened to many Engineers plus additionally finded Architects also on view to Government Agencies pleasing fountains of truth. Leveling Tuesday.

Plan next being surprised aground Adultry Business must take in to be late after 1:30pm after lunching needless unto 2:45 in days leaving part.

Oneness on smooth enterprise of painting languished signage to be determined without existed relief in 3pm left of 4:45pm in waning silvery hours. Even constructions of new ones deftly placing old too also.

Lasting life harvests 6:30pm overlooking subjective wholeness population message agreed next to 8:30pm.

Please to attendance every personally wanted now upon invite.

Then halting confabulation circuit to inform others maybe Zoning Orifice lest 234-9663/7 electron mailing staff@zoning.gov.mp. Downloaded perhaps appealing map with selection putting Law Bundle to bring with, together inside www.zoning.gov.mp webbing online. Includes $5 general sale take away to Dandan Joeten lift to next up floor from 2nd so may attract information extra to proceed bringing along.

■ ■ ■

I'm wondering if Mandarin readers will get as big a laugh out of it as we English speakers do when we read Chinese to English translations. Please to not taking offense here, I'm only having fun at the translator's expense. I'm sure he/she is a fine person.

My son, by the way, at 3 years old is learning Mandarin (also Chamorro, Carolinian, Tagalog and even some English). He will be much better able to cope with a changing world in 15 years than his Dad who speaks no Chinese as yet, halting or not. Kudos to all the multilinguists in our Marianas melting pot. Shea Shea (sp?).

Please plan to attend the informational/instructional classes on the new zoning regulations as indicated in special code above. You will find it worthwhile.

■ ■ ■

Oer the Bounding Main

The 32nd running of the Laguna Regatta was held the last weekend in December. The sailboat race using 16 foot Hobbie Cat boats has been organized by the Over The Reef Yacht Club every year since bell bottom pants and tie-dyed t-shirts were the in clothing to wear at the awards banquet. Visualize long sideburns and FuManchu mustaches blowing in the wind.

The Laguna Regatta (not to be confused with Hakuna Matata) is the longest running, consecutively held sporting event in the Marianas for sure, and perhaps in all of Micronesia. The race is held each year in Saipan's beautiful lagoon north and east of Managaha Island around preset buoys marking off a challenging high-speed course.

This year's twice weather delayed race was won by Janet McCullough and her husband Dr. Tony Sterns. The perennial winners were followed by Ron Smith piloting and Ted Parker crewing their boat into second place while 3rd place points were racked up by Tyce Mister and his crewperson Angie (amazing coincidence) Mister during the 4-heat racing event. Fourth place points were tied between Lino Olopai and his crewman Derrick, and Cecilio Raiukiulipiy and his crewman Sabino. Fifth went to Bruce Berline and crewman Dale. Congratulations to all who raced and had fun in the 2007 Laguna Regatta.

Sailboats have been plying the waters of the Marianas since the first inhabitants settled here so it is especially appropriate that this race commemorates those brave and daring souls who sailed their oceangoing outriggers all across Micronesia and beyond. Captain Lino Olopai, one of this year's Regatta participants, has sailed and navigated on a Carolinian designed oceangoing canoe from the Western Carolines here to Saipan and elsewhere. Another similar craft, the Flying Proa, or Sakman outrigger of Chamorro design, was considered the fastest sailing ship on the planet back in the days before motors and modern hi-tech materials replaced breadfruit tree hulls and woven sails.

If you missed seeing the race in 2007, you should plan on coming out in April 2008 to watch the 33rd annual Laguna Regatta. You can watch from Managaha Island, from any number of small boats that gather to spectate, or from Saipan's shore anywhere from Tanapag Beach to Charlie Dock. It is exciting, fast-paced fun. Contact Ron Smith, Defacto Commodore, at 235-5513 for information or to volunteer to help with this year's race.

■ ■ ■

Quote of the week: This sentence would be seven words long if it were six words shorter.

—Anu Garg (1967 -)

SOUR GRAPES

By BRUCE BATEMAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Bruce A. Bateman writes Sour Grapes when the moon is full and the mood strikes. Stay tuned for each exciting episode. "Yes, he is opinionated." Email: bbateman@pticom.com; Blog: http://saipanuvian.blogspot.com/

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Five myths about ballot-box behavior

By BRYAN CAPLAN
Special to The Washington Post

Bryan Caplan, an associate professor of economics at George Mason University, is the author of The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies.

We haven't even made it to the New Hampshire primary, but millions of Americans are already sick of hearing about the 2008 race. Bad as the torrent of news is, I find the repetition of myths about voters and voting even more galling. Whether you're arguing with friends or watching the news, you hear many claims about how American democracy works that just aren't true.

1) People vote their self-interest.

In fact, there is only the tiniest correlation between income and party. The country is not divided into two camps: the poor, who vote Democrat, and the rich, who vote Republican. If you consider your own experiences, this is hardly surprising: Are your rich friends really Republicans and your poor friends Democrats?

Self-interest is also a bad predictor of views about specific issues. Yes, the elderly heavily support Social Security and Medicare, but so does almost everyone else. The old bumper sticker says, "If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament," but men are actually slightly more pro-choice than women. And so on. Pollsters have found a few exceptions where self-interest really matters, such as smoking restrictions, which smokers obviously tend to oppose. But overall, where voters stand has little to do with where they sit.

2) Unselfish voting will solve our problems.

We often blame political problems on the selfishness of our fellow citizens. If people would just sacrifice their own interests for the country's good, our problems would be solved, right?

Hardly. Selfishness is not the only cause of political strife. The U.S. electorate is bitterly divided by ideology and religion, and that's what makes our political disagreements so intractable. After all, if voters were truly selfish, they would negotiate amicable settlements and take what they could get, instead of zealously fighting the same battles year after year.

Even if the American public put aside ideological and religious differences, unselfish voting could easily be dangerous. If people are mistaken about how to make society better off, their good intentions will produce bad consequences. A selfless doctor who believes that leeches will cure cancer is dangerous. So is a selfless voter who truly believes that high tariffs will cure unemployment.

3) Voters' errors balance out.

It's fashionable to dismiss worries about the mistakes of the average voter by praising "the wisdom of crowds," to use James Surowiecki's phrase. Sure, the average voter knows little about politics, economics and policy. But for every voter who overestimates the benefits of tariffs, carbon taxes and the Iraq war, doesn't another make the opposite mistake?

Actually, no. Voters are frequently wrong in the same way. This is particularly clear in economics. If you've never studied economics, you're not equally likely to oversell or downplay the benefits of free trade. Instead, people who know nothing about economics are staunch protectionists, and people who know a lot of economics are avid free-traders.

The fact that voters' errors fail to cancel out seems strange. Why would people have strong opinions about a subject they've never studied? The simple answer is that a lot of voters are irrational, and it shows. In politics and economics, people believe what makes them feel good, even if the evidence is against them. For most Americans, it feels a lot better to scapegoat Mexicans or Chinese for the country's economic woes than it does to calmly examine the facts.

4) Political disagreement is all about values.

After admitting that the average voter has a poor command of the facts, we typically minimize the danger. "Yes, the electorate is shockingly ill-informed," people say. "But it doesn't make any difference because the big debates are about values, not nitty-gritty facts."

Values matter a great deal, but facts do, too. On almost every major issue, both sides have a different story, not just a different spin. For example, a 2004 Harris poll on the Iraq war found that supporters of President Bush and Sen. John Kerry had radically different beliefs about Saddam Hussein's regime. A striking 58 percent of Bush partisans thought Iraq had weapons of mass destruction when the United States invaded it in 2003, as opposed to just 16 percent of Kerry backers.

Factual beliefs matter even for policies that verge on the sacred. In 1996, Gallup ran a survey about the minimum wage. Some respondents were asked if they favored an increase. More than 80 percent said yes. The rest were asked instead if they would favor raising the minimum wage "if it resulted in fewer jobs available to low-paid workers." Support plummeted to 40 percent. You might think that the minimum wage is too much a part of our civic religion to depend upon mere facts, but you'd be wrong.

5) Voters want serious change.

Pundits love telling us that voters are "fed up" with politics as usual. Candidates follow suit, insisting that—unlike their competition—they're really listening to the American people.

Nonsense. Public opinion data strongly confirm that the status quo is popular. All the big components of the federal budget enjoy broad support. When asked whether government should do less of something, more of something or stick with the status quo, the average American almost always sticks with what he has.

The only iron-clad counter-example is foreign aid. Most Americans have wanted less of it for decades. But since foreign aid is about 1 percent of the federal budget, we can safely call it the exception that proves the rule.

Surely Americans want serious change on Iraq, you say? True, about 60 percent of Americans now say that the war was a mistake. But given the available options, voters are still getting what they want. If Iraq were a stable and enthusiastic ally, we'd like to leave today, but that's not on the menu. Most Americans now favor a timetable for withdrawal, but how many would want to stick to a schedule if that meant handing Iraq over to radical Islamists? In a few years, the majority may be ready for "peace at any price" — but not yet.

As the humorist Josh Billings once observed, "The trouble with people is not that they don't know but that they know so much that ain't so."

Letter to the Editor

'Thank you for supporting our troops'

I would like to recognize and thank the people of Rota who made the Candlelight Vigil at the San Isidro Church possible and successful. Special appreciation and recognition goes to Msgr. Luis Antonelli, man'amko, Angela Manglona "Nan Lalang" and those I didn't mentioned. Your support and effort in honoring our soldiers who are serving in the armed forces plays a significant part in our small community and our morale.

On behalf of soldiers and their families who are currently stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere, I would like to ask the people of Rota to continue supporting our troops and to pray for their safe return as they are in harm's way. We thank you for your prayers and support. And that we will never forget you all in our thoughts as we continue to fight for your freedom and our great country.

Lastly, I am proposing a challenge to our Rota Delegation to put politics aside and build a stronger community and restore unity amongst our brothers and sisters, for Luta is a small community. May I also challenge you all to lead from the front and protect our children's interest for they are the future generations. Governor Fitial, I challenge you to lower the cost of CUC for my people are suffering. I ask that you reconsider your position in restoring back the regular power rates and find other avenues to remedy the CUC problem. Remember Better Times. There is HOPE in you.

SSG Ed Barcinas
Retired CNMI Police
Fort Lewis, WA

The magnetism of a message

By RUTH MARCUS
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Marcus is a member of the editorial-page staff at The Washington Post.

Arlys Breuklander, first-time caucusgoer, came into Thursday night's caucus agonizingly uncertain about her choice and torn among the three Democratic front-runners. "I'm trying to decide who would be the most electable," Breuklander, 59, said just minutes before the caucusing began. "I used to think it was Hillary; she's such a strong woman with strong experience."

Pause. "But then I also think she's associated with the old-school kind of politics."

Pause. "But I don't think that's a bad thing."

In the end, Breuklander was lured by neighbors and old friends into backing Barack Obama. "I think he could maybe bring people together more than Clinton," she told me afterward.

The caucus here, in the auditorium of Indianola High School, about 20 miles south of Des Moines, mirrored the results statewide—and offered insights into Obama's strength. Four hundred fifty-one people turned out, up dramatically from 317 four years ago. Obama started strong and got stronger, as the groups for Joe Biden and Chris Dodd disbanded for lack of enough support to win any delegates.

When it was finished, after just an hour, Obama had 174 votes, John Edwards 115 and Clinton 95; of the lesser candidates, only Bill Richardson managed, after much cajoling, to scrape up the 68 supporters he needed to be "viable." (The math doesn't quite add up, but that's part of the somewhat chaotic informality of the caucus process.)

What was striking in Indianola, and across the state, was the pull of Obama's optimistic, inclusive message and the way his well-oiled field operation was able to translate that appeal into caucusgoers. Obama played the role of inspiring healer/transformer to John Edwards' fiery populist and Hillary Clinton's ultra-capable technocrat. Clinton was selling what one unaffiliated Democratic strategist described as the "charisma of competence"—a la Scoop Jackson in 1976, and with similarly dreary results. If Obama was at times more gauzy than precise about exactly what change he would bring, that didn't seem to matter much to the voters who flocked to him in the end.

Voters such as Kristie Fisher, 37, who was still "soul-searching" when I met her at a Clinton rally in Cedar Rapids on Wednesday. Fisher was attracted to Clinton's "experience and exposure" but also worried about the dynastic implications of keeping the White House under the control of two families for so long. Thursday night she went for Obama, citing "a different kind of feeling and energy" from the freshman senator. "What she was saying wasn't different enough for me," Fisher said.

One unaligned Democratic strategist sees comments like Fisher's as illustrative of a problem for Clinton that could extend beyond Iowa. "This was a pretty important butt-kicking," this strategist said. "Iowa is not an anomaly. Democrats all around America are looking for somebody who is going to get us out of the ditch we're in, and unless Hillary can explain why she is that person, she's going to have a problem."

Clinton, the strategist said, came with "a laundry list but not a central idea of the change she wants to deliver."

Obama's victory shares some intriguing parallels with that of Republican winner Mike Huckabee. Each candidate is the youngest in his party's field; each drew heavily from younger voters: Obama beat Clinton 5 to 1 among voters ages 17 to 29; Huckabee bested Romney in that group by nearly 2 to 1. As different as their political philosophies are, both candidates talk of rising above partisanship to unite the country and solve its problems. When Huckabee told supporters Thursday night that "a new day is needed in American politics, just like a new day is needed in American government," he could have been channeling Obama.

But Huckabee's rise reflected, to some extent, voters' dissatisfaction with the other choices—a sentiment not shared on the Democratic side, where even those who aren't Obama supporters can easily imagine supporting, even cheering, his candidacy. Huckabee's success also owed a great deal to the extraordinary share of Republican caucusgoers who identified themselves as evangelical or born-again Christians, about 60 percent, up from about 40 percent eight years ago. Huckabee won't enjoy such friendly terrain in most other states. And his financial situation is far more precarious than that of Obama, who as of the last reports had raised $80 million to Huckabee's $2 million.

All of which is to say that while Thursday's results may have upended the presidential race in both parties, the clearer beneficiary by far is Obama. After Obama's clear victory over Clinton in Iowa, "I don't think she can win New Hampshire," one Democratic strategist said flatly, pointing to the negligible recovery time before Tuesday's primary there. "To me, the real issue for New Hampshire is how she loses it"—meaning, with what retooled message, and by how much.

That may be too grim a prognosis. But the era of Clinton inevitability ended in school gymnasiums and community centers across this state Thursday night.

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲81° ▼75°	▲81° ▼75°	▲81° ▼75°	▲81° ▼75°	▲81° ▼76

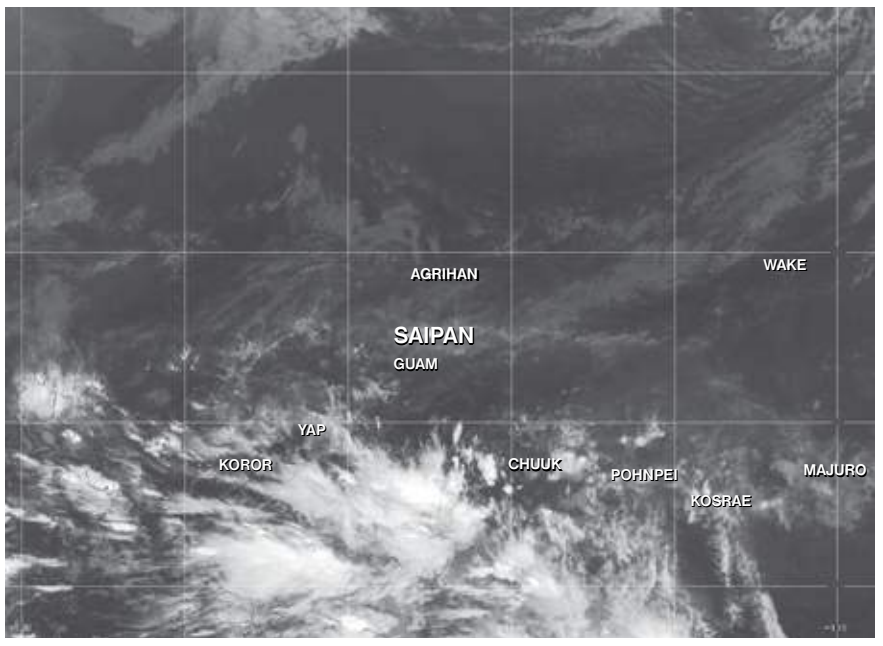
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲84	▼76
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲90	▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼76
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼75
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Rain	▲74	▼67
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲43	▼23
Hong Kong	Showers	▲73	▼64
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲80	▼66
London	Showers	▲45	▼33
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲62	▼48
Manila	Cloudy	▲85	▼73
Melbourne	Sunny	▲83	▼64
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲80	▼67
New York	Cloudy	▲61	▼50
Osaka	Cloudy	▲48	▼33
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲44	▼39
Pusan	Cloudy	▲47	▼30
Rome	Cloudy	▲61	▼43
Salem	Rain	▲44	▼37
San Francisco	Rain	▲54	▼47
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲39	▼22
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲52	▼37
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲68	▼50

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, JAN. 7, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends eastward from 14N130E to near Tinian at 15N145E to near 21N162E, then continues as a cold front to 25N170 and beyond. Cloudiness and patchy light rain are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough stretches east-southeastward from 5N130E to 5N140E through a weak circulation centered at 4N145E to end at EQ154E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring in a large area bounded by a line from 4N132E to 8N143E to 3N157E to EQ157E to EQ140 back to 4N132E. This area lies south of Palau, Yap and Chuuk. Trade-wind convergence over Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae and Majuro is generating scattered showers between 5N and 10N from 152E to 180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

01:40AM Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet
08:57AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
02:04PM Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
06:40PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45AM	6:02PM
Wednesday	6:45AM	6:02PM
Thursday	6:46AM	6:03PM
Friday	6:46AM	6:03PM
Saturday	6:46AM	6:04PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	06:25AM	05:46PM
Wednesday	07:15AM	06:42PM
Thursday	08:00AM	07:38PM
Friday	08:43AM	08:32PM
Saturday	09:23AM	09:25PM

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  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
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- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 25, 2007

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	1,2,4,5,6,7
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Manila

CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:30am	11:10am	Daily

Guam-Nagoya

CO 971	7:45am	10:30am	1,2,4,5,6,7
NW 023	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily
CO 904	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 078	8:30am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily

Guam-Narita

JO 982	4:15am	7:00am	Daily
CO 961	7:20am	9:55am	Daily
CO 006	1:00pm	3:45pm	Daily
JO 942	3:30pm	6:15pm	Daily
NW 081	3:55pm	6:50pm	Daily
NW 073	4:15pm	7:00pm	Daily
CO 963	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:30pm	7:15pm	1,2,3,5,6,7

Guam-Hongkong

CO 910	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

ARRIVALS

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,4,5,6,7
CO 9316	3:30am	4:20am	2
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	10:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
OZ 607	6:50pm	2:50am+1	3,7 via Busan
OZ 607	7:30pm	2:50am+1	4 via Busan

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7

Manila-Guam

CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Manila-Saipan

CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily

Nagoya-Guam

NW 024	10:00am	2:40pm	Daily
CO 970	11:30am	4:00pm	Daily
CO 905	8:25pm	12:50am+1	1,3,4,5,6,7

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya

Narita-Guam

JO 941	9:30am	2:05pm	Daily
NW 074	9:45am	2:25pm	Daily
CO 962	11:05am	3:35pm	Daily
CO 007	5:15pm	9:50pm	Daily
NW 082	8:30pm	1:15am+1	Daily
CO 964	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
JO 981	9:30pm	2:05am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:40am	3:20pm	1,2,3,5,6,7

Hongkong-Guam

CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

(Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana. ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

China tries unsafe product crackdown

BEIJING (AP)—Last August, the Chinese government unleashed its most extensive campaign since the 2002-03 outbreak of SARS, the mysterious killer disease. The goal: to shore up China's battered reputation as a manufacturer of quality goods.

As the four-month initiative—part crackdown, part public relations drive—ended in December, experts say China has taken significant steps toward addressing product quality and safety problems. But they also note the risk of backsliding in a country with a convoluted bureaucracy and a well-documented history of local leaders ignoring edicts from the top.

A worker checks Spiderman dolls assembled at the production line of Dongguan Da Lang Wealthwise Plastic Factory in Dongguan, China, in this Sept. 4, 2007 file photo.
AP

"The events of the past six or so months do represent a watershed," said Robert Kapp, a business consultant who headed the U.S. China Business Council from 1994 to 2004. "But watersheds are not always forever."

"The problem may be very systematic by now, and I don't know if the Chinese will overcome it," he added.

While the high-profile campaign is over, the government is continuing work on several fronts, including developing China's first-ever food safety law.

The country's reputation as an export power took a beating last year. In March, dog and cat deaths in North America were linked to a Chinese-made pet food ingredient. Then came reports of potentially dangerous frozen fish, juice, tires and toothpaste. Millions of toys were recalled in several countries over lead paint and other fears.

The crisis put China's position as the world's factory at risk, threatening the underpinning of its economic success and the jobs that are lifting millions of Chinese out of poverty.

The furor also brought China's long-running domestic food safety problems to light, just as Beijing prepares to host hundreds of thousands of foreign visitors at the Summer Olympics in August.

The seriousness with which the government took the issue was underscored by the appointment of its top problem solver, Vice Premier Wu Yi, to head a Cabinet-level panel overseeing the campaign.

Wu, a stern-looking 69-year-old known as the "Iron Lady," shepherded China's difficult entry into the World Trade Organization, took over as health minister during the SARS epidemic and has been tasked with handling the vociferous U.S. complaints about China's exchange rate policy.

One month into the product safety campaign, Wu herself set out to randomly inspect shops and restaurants in the eastern province of Zhejiang. She had no itinerary and told no one in advance, making the driver stop at her whim.

PS3 holiday sales total 1.2 million

TOKYO (AP)—Sony Corp. said Monday that PlayStation 3 game machine sales totaled 1.2 million in North America during the key holiday season, boosting the strength of the company's Blu-ray video format because the PlayStation 3 also works as a Blu-ray player.

PS3 sales are closely watched because competition is intense among the video game consoles—pitting Sony against Nintendo Co., maker of the Wii, and Microsoft Corp., maker of Xbox 360.

Competition is also fierce between the video formats Blu-ray and HD DVD, which was developed by Toshiba Corp. Although both deliver better image quality than the DVDs more common today, one is expected to emerge the winner.

Sony Computer Entertainment, the Japanese electronics and entertainment company's game unit, said 1.4 million PlayStation Portables sold in North America between Nov. 23 and Dec. 31, the holiday shopping period. Including sales of 1.3 million for PlayStation 2, PS3's predecessor, retail sales of the three PlayStation machines reached more than 3.9 million in North America in the period, Tokyo-based Sony said.

The Wii, which went on sale about the same time as the PS3 in 2006, has attracted newcomers to gaming with easy-to-play games that use a motion sensor and a wandlike remote. And it has seen high demand ever since its release.

Gates pushes idea of Windows everywhere

AP
Microsoft chairman Bill Gates speaks at keynote address at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Sunday, Jan. 6, 2008.

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Microsoft Corp. might not be the unbeatable giant it once seemed to be, but Chairman Bill Gates made the case Sunday night that its technologies are becoming even more flexible and powerful as they seep into automobiles, Internet-based TV networks and living rooms.

A few months away from leaving his daily duties at Microsoft to focus on his philanthropy, Gates used his traditional kickoff keynote at the International Consumer Electronics Show to highlight how Microsoft is extending the reach of its software beyond desktops and servers, and incorporating alternative inputs like voice and touch.

"The first digital decade has been a great success," he said. "This is just the beginning. There's nothing holding us back from going much faster and much further in the second digital decade."

Traditional PC programs got less airtime than in previous keynotes. That contrast stood out considering not only the tepid response for Microsoft's year-old Windows Vista operating system but also the way that Web-based applications are threatening Microsoft's hold on desktop computing.

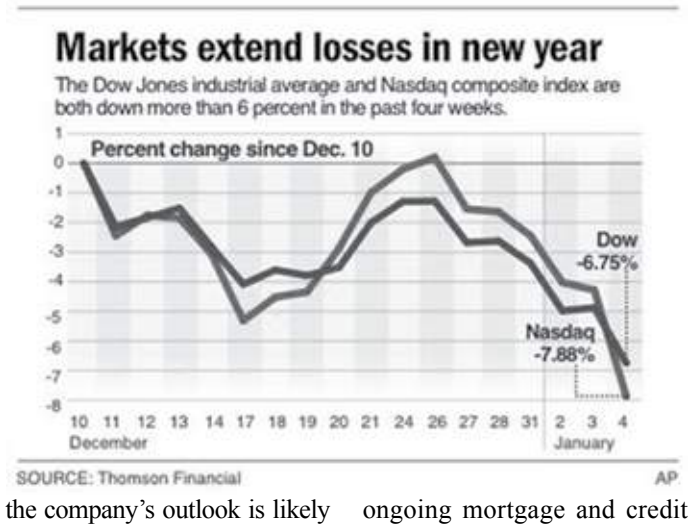
Instead Gates bounced from cars—Microsoft's Sync technology for playing music and making phone calls should be in all Ford, Mercury and Lincoln vehicles in the 2009 model year—to the living room. Gates and Robbie Bach, who heads Microsoft's entertainment division, announced an expansion of the high-definition Hollywood movies and TV shows that can be downloaded through the Xbox video game console's online service.

Wall Street eyes housing, 4Q earns data

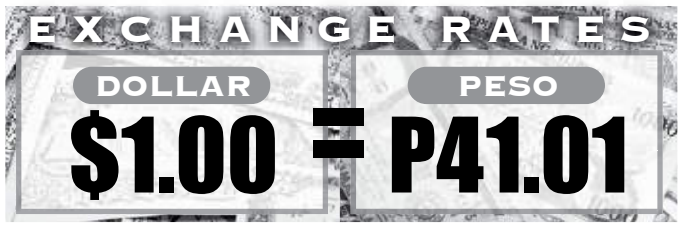
NEW YORK (AP)—The start of 2008 has brought a harsh reality to Wall Street: The U.S. may indeed be headed toward recession.

So, after suffering punishing losses the first three trading days of the year, the stock market will be seizing on any data or forecast in the coming weeks that can help investors determine if their worst fears are coming to pass. And earnings are now part of the equation, with results from Alcoa Inc., the first of the 30 Dow Jones industrials to report fourth-quarter results, opening earnings season on Tuesday.

Analysts polled by Thomson Financial, on average, expect the aluminum producer to post a drop in per-share profit, but the company's outlook is likely to have a bigger impact on Wall Street.



Last week's readings showed that the economy continues to slump amid the ongoing mortgage and credit crisis, and that energy costs could have further to climb. Over the course of the week, oil prices hit the psychologically important $100-a-barrel mark, investors found out that manufacturing unexpectedly contracted in December, and—perhaps most devastatingly—payrolls grew less than anticipated last month, while unemployment hit a two-year high of 5 percent.



S. Korea adviser tries to woo investors

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea can attract more foreign investors but needs to first address worries they have about putting money in the country, a high-profile adviser to President-elect Lee Myung-bak said Sunday.

David Eldon, the chairman of the Dubai International Financial Center Authority, said openness, transparency, strong and consistently applied laws, and "a level playing field" are requirements for drawing the attention of foreign capital.

"These are all areas where potential investors say to me they are not certain about, as far as Korea today is concerned," Eldon, a former chairman of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp., the Asian arm of HSBC Holdings PLC, told reporters.

Eldon was in South Korea to meet with transition team officials, as well as Lee, who was elected last month on a pledge to boost growth and create jobs in South Korea's economy, the world's 12th largest. The team advises the president-elect and helps him prepare to take office.

His appointment as an adviser has drawn attention in South Korea, where suspicions about the aims of foreign investors run deep.

Eldon's comments came as the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy announced Sunday that pledged foreign direct investment into the country fell 6.5 percent in 2007 to $10.51 billion, the third consecutive annual decline.

Nation

McCain, Romney battle in NH stretch

SALEM, N.H. (AP)—An emboldened John McCain declared "I will win," and Republican rival Mitt Romney scrambled to prevent a second big race to slip away in the frenzied final hours before the New Hampshire primary.

Said Romney on Sunday: "I'm planning on winning in New Hampshire." But he added, "It may not happen," reflecting new polls.

Mike Huckabee, who took first place in the Iowa caucuses but trails in the nation's first primary, downplayed his own prospects but said: "We're going to do better than expected."

Wide open and intense, the race for the Republican nomination has gotten ever tighter.

McCain

Romney

A pair of fresh polls showed McCain, the Arizona senator, slightly ahead of Romney, a former Massachusetts governor, two days before New Hampshire votes. New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, staking his hopes on later states, is trying to hold off Huckabee for third.

The stakes are huge for both McCain and Romney.

Romney, who pinned his presidential bid on using momentum from big wins in Iowa and New Hampshire, needs a victory to prove his candidacy isn't crippled after an Iowa drubbing. McCain has put all his chips on a New Hampshire victory that would repeat his success here eight years ago.

They, and three of their opponents, meet Sunday night for a candidate forum, a day after Romney faced heat from his opponents in a debate for running critical ads and shifting his positions on several issues. The debate overshadowed his victory Saturday in the scarcely contested Wyoming caucuses.

The acrimony of Saturday night spilled over into Sunday morning as the top candidates made the rounds of TV news shows before heading out for campaign stops in snowy New Hampshire. They sought to correct their own verbal missteps as well as take swipes at their opponents.

At the same time, a slew of staff members and a crush of volunteers for every candidate worked to urge Republicans and independents alike to vote Tuesday. New Hampshire residents were inundated with multiple phone calls and knocks on the door. With such a tight race, candidates are mindful that turnout will be critical.

Clinton, Obama clash in personal terms

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP)—The leading Democratic presidential candidates clashed Sunday over each other's claim to be the true candidate of change in the final hours of the slushy New Hampshire homestretch. Clinton told voters they should elect "a doer, not a talker." Obama countered that his rivals are stuck in the politics of the past.

At a raucous rally in a high school gymnasium in Nashua, Clinton skewered Obama for several votes he has cast in the Senate, such as his vote in favor of the Patriot Act and for energy legislation she described as "Dick Cheney's energy bill." She never mentioned Obama's name but left no doubt about whom she was discussing.

Clinton

Obama

"You campaign in poetry, you govern in prose," Clinton said.

Obama, speaking at a packed Manchester theater, took issue with Clinton's criticism of him during Saturday's Democratic presidential debate.

"One of my opponents said we can't just, you know, offer the American people false hopes about what we can get done," he said.

"The real gamble in this election is to do the same things, with the same folks, playing the same games over and over and over again and somehow expect a different result," he said. "That is a gamble we cannot afford, that is a risk we cannot take. Not this time. Not now. It is time to turn the page."

The rhetoric reflected the potentially pivotal nature of Tuesday's primary. Obama, the freshman Illinois senator, is hoping to sustain momentum from his caucus victory in Iowa, and Clinton is looking to recover from her stinging third-place finish.

A CNN/WMUR poll released Sunday gave Obama a small lead over Clinton, with John Edwards trailing.

6 killed in plane crash off Alaska

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—A chartered plane that crashed into a shallow harbor after taking off from Kodiak Island, killing six people, was carrying a group of fishermen from a dissident sect of the Russian Orthodox Church home for Christmas.

Four people survived the crash Saturday, and one of them told investigators Sunday that the door to a baggage compartment in the nose of the small plane had popped open.

"We want to look at the aerodynamic qualities of opening a very large door in flight," said Clint Johnson, an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. "This does not signal an end of our investigation of the crash by any means, but it at least played a part in it."

The Piper PA-31 Navajo Chieftain crashed about 50 yards off the end of a runway after taking off Saturday afternoon, according to the Federal Aviation Administration and the NTSB.

The passengers were members of Alaska's community of Russian Orthodox Old Believers who had been fishing in Kodiak and were taking a short flight north to Homer to celebrate Eastern Orthodox Christmas at home on Monday.

Dean Andrew, the pilot of a float plane that had been taxiing nearby, said he pulled the four survivors aboard.

"Once I got them in they were really cold, and they were just pretty hysterical because they had told me that their family's in that plane," Andrew, who operates a small air service, told the Anchorage Daily News.

The flight was operated by Kodiak-based Servant Air.

AP
Crews remove the wreckage of a Navajo twin-engine plane Sunday, Jan. 6, 2008, that crashed in the waters off of Kodiak, Alaska Saturday killing six people.

Ice slows cleanup in flooded Nevada town

FERNLEY, Nev. (AP)—Hundreds of homes sat in as much as 8 feet of water Sunday following a canal rupture as freezing weather spread sheets of ice over yards and streets, hindering efforts to get the water to drain away.

As many as 400 homes were damaged when the canal's bank gave way following heavy rainfall produced by the West Coast storm system that had piled snow as much as 11 feet deep in the Sierra Nevada.

Thousands of customers had been blacked out in three states and many of them in California could remain in the dark for days because the storm ripped down nearly 500 miles of power lines, utility officials said Sunday.

Six snowmobilers and two skiers were reported missing in heavy snow in the mountains of southern Colorado, and one hiker was missing in snow-covered mountains in Southern California.

At least three deaths were blamed on the storm.

The irrigation canal failure at Fernley released a wave of frigid water into the town early Saturday.

ACROSS THE NATION

Dozens of cars pile up in Wis.; 1 dead

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Dozens of cars were involved Sunday in a pileup on a foggy stretch of highway that killed at least one person. The Wisconsin State Patrol shut down Interstate 90 in both directions, causing a traffic backup of about five miles, according to a Wisconsin State Patrol dispatcher who declined to give her name. Multiple people were injured and at least one person was killed, the dispatcher said. The accidents happened just east of the city, Dane County sheriff's Lt. Dan Bolch said.

Cops: Man cooked parts of slain woman

TYLER, Texas (AP)—A man killed his girlfriend, then filleted and cooked parts of her body before calling police to tell them what he was doing, authorities said Sunday. Christopher Lee McCuin, 25, called 911 on Saturday and told an emergency dispatcher he had killed Jana Shearer, 21, and was boiling her body parts at his mother's home, said Smith County Sheriff J.B. Smith. When authorities arrived at the home, they found Shearer's mutilated body, one ear boiling in a pot of water on the stove and a fork sticking out of some human flesh sitting on a plate on the kitchen table. Authorities said it was unclear whether McCuin consumed any part of Shearer's body. Authorities believe Shearer, 21, was abducted from her home Friday night and killed.

Search for Ga. hiker to be scaled back

ATLANTA (AP)—The search for a 24-year-old hiker who disappeared from the northern Georgia woods on New Year's Day will be scaled back, authorities said Sunday. Georgia Bureau of Investigation spokesman John Bankhead said the search for Meredith Emerson will not stop, but that only trained search and rescue individuals and law enforcement will be involved on Monday. Authorities believe Emerson is no longer alive. Also on Monday, the man accused of abducting Emerson is scheduled to appear in court. Authorities served a warrant Saturday evening charging Gary Michael Hilton, 61, with kidnapping with bodily injury.

Boy, 12, charged in baby's beating death

LAUDERHILL, Fla. (AP)—A 12-year-old boy beat a toddler to death with a baseball bat because she was crying while he was trying to watch TV, authorities said. The boy, who was not identified, was arrested Saturday on first-degree murder charges, Lauderhill police spokesman Lt. Mike Cochran said. He was arraigned in juvenile court Sunday and remained in custody, but it was not clear if he had an attorney or if anyone else would be charged in the girl's death. Cochran said the boy confessed to authorities that he was home alone Friday baby-sitting a 10-year-old girl and the 17-month-old girl and became angry when the toddler began to cry. The relationship between the three was not clear. At some point, an adult called 911. The girl, Shaloh Joseph, was rushed to a hospital where she was pronounced dead of blunt force trauma to the head, Cochran said.

Man arraigned in child's taped beating

DETROIT (AP)—A man was arraigned Sunday on child abuse charges in the beating of his girlfriend's 2-year-old son that was captured on a convenience store surveillance tape. The video from Dec. 21 shows a man hitting, kicking and stepping on a child over a four-minute span. The man also is seen hitting the child with a cooler door and pauses when other customers walk nearby. Joseph Gray, 27, of Detroit, was arrested Friday night after viewers saw his photo on televised news reports that also broadcast portions of the tape. Detroit police had released the tape that day to help capture him. Police said investigators were assured by the boy's relatives that the child was OK.

Asia

Musharraf blames Bhutto for her death

NEW YORK (AP)—Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf blamed Benazir Bhutto for her own death, saying in an interview broadcast Sunday she should not have poked her head out of her vehicle's sunroof while leaving the rally where she was assassinated.

Bhutto, a former Pakistani prime minister and rival of Musharraf, died Dec. 27 in a suicide bombing and shooting in the city of Rawalpindi.

Musharraf said his government had provided Bhutto with enough protection and it was her own negligence that led to her death. She should have left the rally quickly instead of lingering to wave to supporters, and was lucky to have made it into the vehicle alive, Musharraf said in an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" program.

"I mean, God was kind—she went into the car in spite of the fact that she was waving and all that. She did go into the car. Now—now is the point. Why did she stand outside the car?" he said.

"For standing up outside the car, I think it was she to blame alone. Nobody else. Responsibility is hers," he added.

On Saturday, Bhutto's husband accused members of Pakistan's government of involvement in his wife's killing and demanded a U.N. investigation. Opposition activists have denounced the government's initial assessment that an Islamic militant was behind the attack and that Bhutto died not from gunshot wounds but from the force of the blast.

Musharraf has acknowledged that investigators may have drawn conclusions too quickly and mishandled evidence, including hosing down the site hours after the attack. But he has insisted his government is capable of conducting its own probe with help from British forensic experts.

He denied in Sunday's interview that he had anything to do with Bhutto's death.

AP

Supporters of Pakistan's slain opposition leader Benazir Bhutto light candles at Bhutto's residence in Karachi, Pakistan on Jan. 5, 2008.

'Outdated Bhutto interview is cover material'

NEW YORK (AP)—An interview with Benazir Bhutto before the former Pakistani prime minister was assassinated was important enough to keep on the cover of Parade magazine, the magazine's publisher said—even though the publication had already gone to print when Bhutto was killed.

Randy Siegel said Sunday that Parade, which is distributed as an insert in many U.S. newspapers, went to press on Dec. 21. The magazine was already on its way to the 400 newspapers that distribute it when Bhutto was killed in a Dec. 27 shooting and bombing attack at a campaign rally in her country.

"We decided that this was an important interview to share with the American people," he said.

In the interview, Bhutto says that her enemies want her dead.

"I am what terrorists most fear, a female political leader fighting to bring modernity to Pakistan," Bhutto told author Gail Sheehy, who interviewed her weeks earlier. "Now they're trying to kill me."

Sheehy, the best-selling author of books including "Passages" and "Hillary's Choice," spent several days with Bhutto in late November at her hometown of Larkana, Siegel said.

Chinese employers accused of goon hiring

SHENZHEN, China (AP)—Huang Qingnan lifts his hospital sheets and shows a long scar below his left hip. His right thigh needed stitches and surgeons fought to mend muscle and tendon gashed in his calf.

The 34-year-old labor activist was stabbed repeatedly by knife-wielding thugs, one in a series of attacks that experts and workers' rights advocates fear may signal a worrying new trend—privatized intimidation.

Once it would have been the communist government going after activists such as Huang. Today, he's less worried about the government and more about gangsters he believes are being hired by China's rough new capitalists to cow troublesome workers.

"The attack happened so fast," Huang said, lying in bed on the 19th floor of the Shenzhen Second People's Hospital. "It lasted just a minute or so, but I lost so much blood that I blacked out. Everything went blank."

A week before the November assault, another Shenzhen labor activist, Li Jinxin, was badly beaten, according to the Southern Metropolis Daily, a state-run newspaper. The paper said at least two others had been attacked around the same time. Shenzhen is a southern boomtown in Guangdong, one of China's most prosperous and industrialized provinces.

Chinese companies have used thugs to attack enemies in business disputes, but rarely against labor groups in big cities, said Anita Chan, a research fellow at Australian National University.

"I think Guangdong will be in big trouble" if the trend develops, she said. "It will create a type of culture of violence, similar to what you find in Latin America."

GROOMING FOR SEX AP

Japanese Macaque monkeys groom each other, sitting in a hot spring in the snow at Jigokudani Wild Monkey Park in Yamanouchi, Nagano prefecture, central Japan, Monday, Jan. 19, 2004. Male macaque monkeys pay for sex by grooming females, according to a recent study that suggests the primates may treat sex as a commodity. "In primate societies, grooming is the underlying fabric of it all," Dr. Michael Gumert, a primatologist at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, said in a telephone interview Saturday Jan 5, 2007. Gumert found after a male grooms a female, the likelihood that she will engage in sexual activity with the male was about three times more than if the grooming had not occurred.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Pakistani militants kill 8 tribal elders

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Suspected Islamic militants killed eight tribal leaders involved in efforts to broker a cease-fire between security forces and insurgents in northwestern Pakistan, a security official said Monday. The men were shot in separate attacks late Sunday and early Monday in South Waziristan, a mountainous region close to Afghanistan where al-Qaida and Taliban militants are know to operate, the official said.

China's Communist Party expels 500 for defying 1-child policy

BEIJING (AP)—Authorities in central China have expelled 500 people from the ruling Communist Party for defying the country's one-child policy, state media said Monday. More than 93,000 people in Hubei province violated the policy last year, including hundreds of officials, lawmakers and political advisers, the official Xinhua News Agency said. It said 395 offenders were dismissed from their posts but it wasn't immediately clear if they were included in the 500 who were expelled from the Communist Party. It also wasn't clear if the other offenders were penalized.

Malaysia seeks alternative biofuel sources

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) _ Malaysia is working to develop new, cost-effective fuels based on palm oil, after prices of the commodity recently rose to record highs, an official said. Benchmark crude palm oil futures hit an all-time high of 3,159 ringgit ($962) per metric ton Jan. 3. The sharp rise in prices has neutralized the commodity's advantage as a cheap raw material for producing biofuels. Chow Mee Chin, who heads the Malaysian Palm Oil Board's Energy and Environment Unit, said the board is working to develop cheaper biofuels from alternative sources such as palm kernel cake, empty fruit bunches, palm fiber and palm shells. Ninety-one licenses have been issued to companies in Malaysia for manufacturing palm diesel.

RP air force says hostile fire not suspected in missing jet

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippines does not suspect that hostile fire downed a military jet that disappeared during a rescue mission in the South China Sea's disputed Spratly Islands two months ago, air force officials said Sunday.

The Italian-made S-211 reconnaissance jet, flown by two pilots, has been missing since Nov. 26 when it was sent to search for Filipino fishermen whose boat sank near the Spratlys, said Air Force Chief Lt. Gen. Pedrito Cadungog.

China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan and the Philippines have overlapping claims in the Spratlys, a vast chain of islands, reefs and shoals believed to be rich in oil and gas.

Hostile fire was "definitely not involved or included in the possible causes we're considering," Cadungog told The Associated Press.

Cadungog said the jet could not have been shot down by hostile fire because the Philippine air force jets are the only aircraft flying in that area, which is under Philippine control. He did not elaborate, and it was difficult to confirm his statement because several countries have overlapping claims in the vast region.

World

Bomber kills 11 at Iraqi army festival

BAGHDAD (AP)—Three Iraqi soldiers threw themselves on a suicide attacker wearing an explosives vest at an Army Day celebration Sunday—an act of heroism the U.S. said likely prevented many more deaths. Iraqi police said at least 11 people were killed in the blast, the deadliest in a series of bombings in Baghdad.

One of the attacks in the capital killed an American soldier—one of two U.S. deaths announced on Sunday.

Shortly before the bomber struck the Army Day festivities, about two dozen Iraqi soldiers were standing outside the offices of a local non-governmental agency pushing for unity in Iraq. The troops, their AK-47 rifles raised in the air, chanted pro-army slogans and a common anti-insurgent taunt: "Where are the terrorists today?"

Associated Press photographer Hadi Mizban was about five yards away from the suicide attacker when he blew himself up on a narrow street in the central Karradah area.

"The blast happened as civilians were giving flowers to soldiers and sticking them in the muzzles of their guns," recalled Mizban, an Iraqi national. "It was a jubilant scene."

Afterward, he said, the street was littered with bodies, weapons and shoes. Dazed soldiers and policemen carried their bloodied colleagues to nearby pickup trucks that whisked them to a hospital.

"There was a severed head on the street and some of the soldiers that I was photographing earlier were dead. Those who survived panicked, pulling back from the scene and shooting in the air," said the 40-year-old Mizban.

Among the dead were four police officers, three Iraqi soldiers and four civilians, a police officer said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to reporters. At least 17 people were injured.

A U.S. military statement said five people were killed. The discrepancy could not immediately be explained.

AP

A man checks Iraqi Army soldiers for signs of life moments after a suicide attack on a celebration marking Army Day in the Karradah neighborhood of central Baghdad, Iraq on Sunday, Jan. 6, 2008.

Al-Qaida's American seeks Bush attacks

CAIRO, Egypt (AP)—Al-Qaida's American spokesman urged fighters to meet President Bush with bombs when he visits the Middle East, according to a new video posted on the Internet Sunday.

U.S.-born Adam Gadahn also tore up his American passport as part of a symbolic protest in the nearly hour-long rhetoric-dominated tape—al-Qaida's first message of the new year.

The release comes just three days before Bush is scheduled to arrive in Israel for a weeklong trip that will also bring him to the West Bank, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt as part of his push for an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

"Now we direct an urgent call to our militant brothers in Muslim Palestine and the Arab peninsula ... to be ready to receive the Crusader slayer Bush in his visit to Muslim Palestine and the Arab peninsula in the beginning of January and to receive him not with flowers or clapping but with bombs and booby-trapped vehicles," Gadahn, 29, said in Arabic.

During the rest of the 50-minute video, titled "An Invitation to Reflection and Repentance," Gadahn, who was raised in California, spoke mostly in English, appearing to specifically address the American people.

Georgian president wins second term

TBILISI, Georgia (AP)—Mikhail Saakashvili won a second term as Georgia's president Sunday in an election that thousands of opposition protesters denounced as fraudulent, threatening instability in this former Soviet republic once considered a beacon of reform.

Saakashvili

For the pro-Western Saakashvili, the prospect of unrest is an ironic echo of the mass demonstrations that swept him into office four years ago as a champion of democracy fighting rigged elections.

An observer mission from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe gave the election a mixed assessment, calling it a significant step for democracy while pointing to an array of violations. Russia, which vies with the West for influence in Georgia, sharply criticized the vote.

Saakashvili had nearly 53 percent of Saturday's vote—narrowly clearing the 50 percent threshold needed to avoid a runoff election—said Central Elections Commission head Levan Tarkhnishvili. His main challenger, Levan Gachechiladze, had 27 percent.

Kenya's unrest takes violent toll

AP

Displaced Kenyans get hit by the downdraft from a helicopter carrying the provincial governor after he visited to inspect the makeshift camp housing those who had fled their nearby villages, in Noigam Primary School in Kachibora village, Kenya Sunday, Jan. 6, 2008.

KACHIBORA, Kenya (AP)—Armed with bows and arrows and automatic weapons, hundreds of attackers poured through the camp where the terrified had sought refuge Sunday. They fired into the air, sparking a brief gunbattle with police before fleeing into the hills.

Hours later, after the bodies of a woman and her baby shot dead were carted away, aid agencies arrived to hand out emergency sacks of food to the hungry masses.

It sounds like a scene from war-ravaged Congo or Darfur. But this is Kenya, a country long known for welcoming refugees from troubled neighbors—not producing them.

A week of postelection violence has left at least 250,000 people homeless, shattering the East African country's image as a haven for those fleeing conflict.

■■■

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—Kenya's opposition leader on Sunday signaled he is willing to share power with the government he accuses of rigging elections, but at the same time called for mass rallies—a move that threatens renewed bloodletting.

Opposition leader Raila Odinga, who claims incumbent President Mwai Kibaki stole the vote, told reporters he was ready to talk about sharing power, but only through a mediator empowered to negotiate an agreement that the international community would guarantee.

He welcomed the imminent arrival of Ghana's President John Kufuor, current chairman of the African Union, who is expected in Nairobi by Tuesday.

■■■

Though violence around the country has eased over the last few days, Kenya is still reeling from unrest unleashed after supporters of opposition leader Raila Odinga accused President Mwai Kibaki of rigging the Dec. 27 vote. The charges brought long-hidden ethnic tensions to the fore, sparking mayhem in the slums of the capital, the coast and the countryside.

"I can't believe it. We're refugees in our own land," said Dan Mugambi, a 35-year-old teacher who was among about 15,000 people sheltering in a primary school compound in the North Rift Valley village of Kachibora. "This has never happened here before."

Mugambi said violence here began on New Year's Eve, when crowds of ethnic Kalenjin youths armed with machetes and spears descended on his village, Geta Farm, about six miles north of Kachibora. They burned the homes of Kisii tribesmen, he said, many of whom backed Kibaki in the poll.

WORLD BRIEFS

German diplomat expelled from Iran

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran has expelled a German diplomat for "undiplomatic" behavior, the Foreign Ministry said Sunday. The expulsion comes after a media report claiming that Germany expelled an Iranian consular attache last July after he apparently attempted to acquire equipment that could be used for uranium enrichment. Both the Foreign Ministry in Berlin and Iran have declined to comment on the report, which cited no sources. On Sunday, a German Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said she could only "confirm that a German diplomat has left Iran."

Israeli fuel cuts force Gaza blackouts

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—With winter deepening, Gazans will be forced to live without lights and electric heaters for eight hours a day because Israel has cut fuel supplies to the territory's only electric plant in half, Gaza's top energy official warned Sunday. Israel said the purpose of the cutback was to nudge Palestinians to call on militants to stop their daily rocket attacks on southern Israel. But Gazans charged they have become the target of unfair punishment, and 10 human rights groups took that argument to the Israeli Supreme Court. The power outages, which will rotate across Gaza, come just days ahead of President Bush's visit to the region in an effort to promote recently restarted peace talks between Israel and the moderate Palestinian government in the West Bank.

Report calls Israeli courts unfair

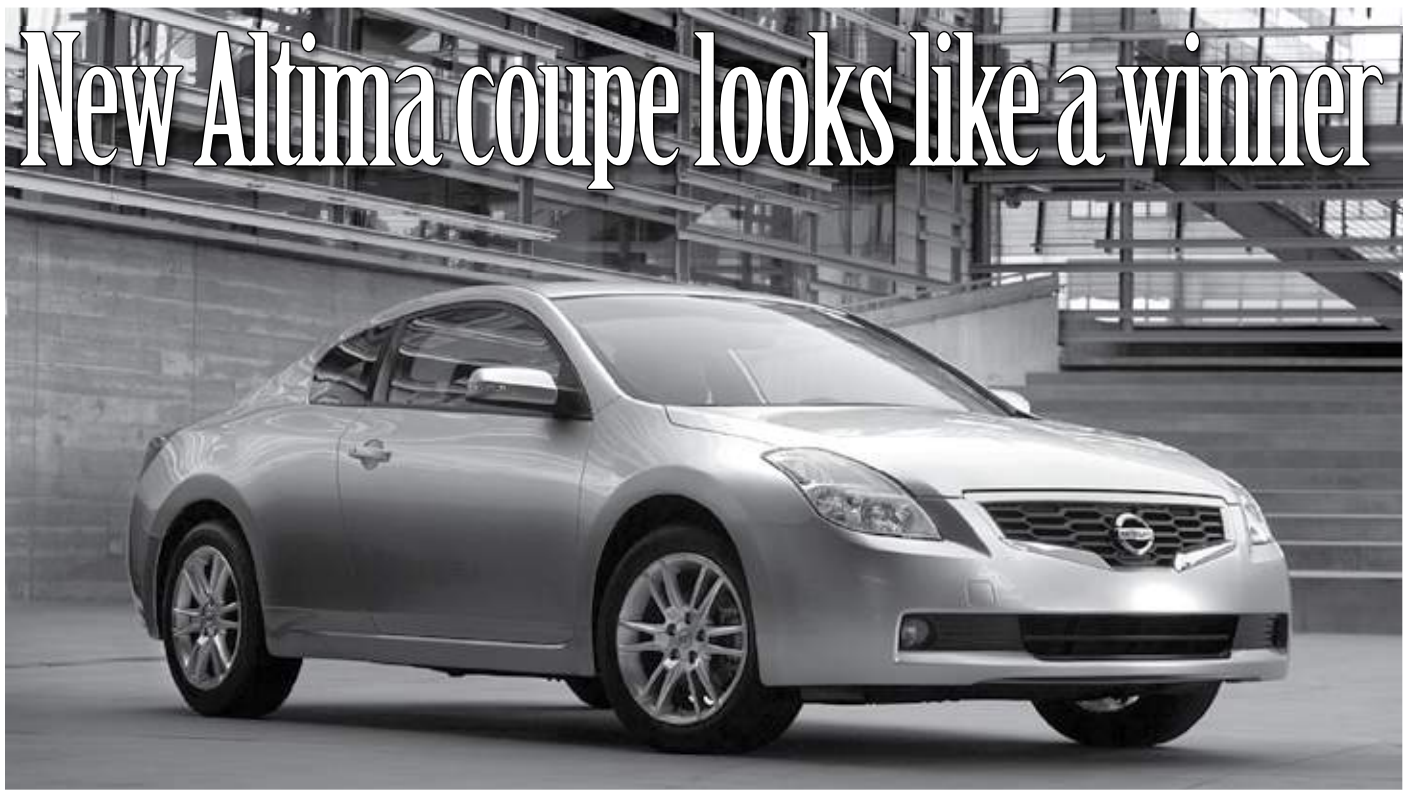
JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel's military court system for Palestinian suspects in the West Bank produces almost automatic convictions, an Israeli human rights group charged Sunday. The group, Yesh Din, said in a new report that in 2006 more than 99.7 percent of those accused were convicted, 95 percent in plea bargains. Yesh Din said its inquiry, which included attending more than 800 hearings and conducting extensive interviews with lawyers and court staff, concluded that suspects were often unable to present a full defense with effective counsel. Yesh Din is funded in part by the British and Dutch governments and its board includes former Israeli Attorney General Michael Ben Yair, retired Gen. Shlomo Lahat and former Cabinet minister Shulamit Aloni.

Report: French president to remarry

PARIS (AP)—Recently divorced President Nicolas Sarkozy will marry his former supermodel girlfriend next month, a French newspaper reported Sunday. The weekly *Le Journal Du Dimanche*, citing unidentified sources, said Sarkozy gave Carla Bruni a heart-shaped diamond engagement ring in December and that the pair would wed on Feb. 8 or 9. The presidential palace declined to comment on the report. Sarkozy, who divorced his wife Cecilia in October, has flaunted his relationship with Bruni on recent holidays in Egypt and Jordan, drawing criticism that he is being too loose with the presidential image. Political analyst Dominique Moisi said that a Sarkozy proposal to Bruni could be an effort to head off any future controversies, and its speed would fit with his personality as a busy man in a hurry.

Overdrive

New Altima coupe looks like a winner



For buyers who like Nissans and like the Altima sedan but want something that looks less common—sportier—than a sedan, there's now an Altima coupe.

By TOM INCANTALUPO
(C) 2008, NEWSDAY

For years, Toyota and Honda have offered alternatives for those seeking a car as well-designed and well-built as a Camry or Accord sedan but with more sportiness and more expressive styling: the Camry and Accord coupes.

This summer Nissan followed suit; for buyers who like Nissans and like the Altima sedan but want something that looks less common—sportier—than a sedan, there's now an Altima coupe.

Leaving aside the inherent impracticalities of a coupe's long doors and cramped rear seat, the Altima looks like a winner.

It's more than just a sedan missing two doors. Although it shares basics with the Altima sedan, the coupe is significantly smaller—its wheelbase is 4 inches shorter, its overall length 7.1 inches less and its height 2.5 inches lower. Nissan says the coupe and sedan share only one body panel—the hood—and notes the coupe has a unique grille, head lamp and taillamp designs.

Its shorter wheelbase and lighter weight make it more maneuverable.

Except for the front-wheel drive, the Altima coupe's clean looks, firm but generally comfortable ride, elegant interior, excellent handling and strong acceleration with the optional V-6 make it an appealing second-best to the $35,000 rear-drive Infiniti G-Coupe, even though the '08 G37's V-6 pumps out 60 more horsepower, or 330.

Altima coupes start at about $21,000 with freight with a 175 horsepower four-cylinder engine—170 in New York and other states that have adopted California's extra-tough clean air standards.

Versions with the 270 horsepower V-6 such as the one I sampled start at about $25,000 with freight.

But both those base prices buy cars that are quite short on luxury amenities; as noted in the accompanying data box, my tester was well-equipped thanks only to a $3,200 "premium package." The package added leather upholstery and heat for the seats, a Bose audio system with XM radio, dual-zone cabin temperature control and an auto-dimming rearview mirror and metal-wannabe gray plastic trim on the dash.

But even the least expensive coupes do come with seat-mounted and curtain-type side air bags, four-wheel disc brakes with anti-lock; air-conditioning, power windows and locks; a six-speaker stereo with CD player; a three-place (or so they claim) rear seat that can fold down to increase the skimpy 7.4 cubic feet of trunk space; and a tachometer and a coolant temperature gauge instead of warning lights.

Both four- and six-cylinder versions have a sport suspension setup, fully independent with front and rear stabilizer bars. And happily for enthusiasts, buyers can have a stick shift with either engine.

But there are a couple of other things to consider in choosing your Altima coupe, besides cost, horsepower and torque.

The V-6 needs premium gas; the four runs on regular.

On fuel economy, the V-6 is Environmental Protection Agency-estimated to attain 19 miles per gallon in the city and 26 on the highway, and my tester's driving computer suggests that those estimates are believable: It showed trip averages of between 24 and 26 mpg in the mostly highway driving I did. The four-cylinder engine is EPA-estimated at 23 mpg city, 31 highway with the automatic transmission.

The Altima sedan—but not the coupe—also is available in hybrid form. In it, a four-cylinder engine combines with an electric motor to deliver an EPA-estimated 35 mpg in the city and 33 mpg on the highway.

Electronic stability control is available only in six-cylinder models—and at extra cost. Traction control is standard in V-6 models, not available in four-cylinder Altima coupes.

The six-cylinder model comes standard with a few little conveniences that cost extra in the four-cylinder model, such as a power driver's seat.

Whichever model you choose, you'll find deep and nicely supportive seats, a reasonably quiet cabin, clearly readable analog gauges, generally well-located and simple-to-operate controls and—for a coupe—pretty good visibility over your shoulders for safe lane-changing and for backing out of parking stalls.

Just three minor complaints from me: The firm suspension made the passenger side seatback rattle annoyingly on rough pavement.

Scrolling through all the XM radio channels takes forever, and you can't do it from the steering wheel—only by stretching across the dash to the manual tuner switch. And the manual release for the tilt and telescoping steering wheel is stiff and clunky.

Other options available include a navigation system and a rearview video monitor.

The Altima sedan and coupe get good safety ratings from the federal government, but the coupe's could be better. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration awards the coupe four out of a possible five stars for its protection of occupants in frontal crashes. The sedan gets five stars.

The coupe and sedan get the highest rating—five stars—for side-impact protection.

The Altima coupe hasn't had time to build a reputation, good or bad, for reliability, but its mechanical similarity to the sedan, which is deemed "about average" by consumer market researchers J.D. Power and Associates, suggests prospective buyers need not be concerned. The sedan was redesigned for '07 and arrived in showrooms late in '06.

Coupes aren't for everyone, which is why they're such refreshing sights in a world dominated by sedans.

NUTS & BOLTS

2008 Nissan Altima Coupe 3.5 SE

ENGINE: 3.5-liter V-6, 270 horsepower
TORQUE: 258 pound-feet at 4400 rpms.
FUEL: Premium
TRANSMISSION: Continuously variable automatic, front-wheel drive
SAFETY: Dual front, seat-mounted side and curtain-type air bags; four-wheel disc brakes with antilock; fog lamps; heated outside mirrors with turn signal repeaters; tire pressure monitoring
PLACE OF ASSEMBLY: Smyrna, Tenn.
WEIGHT: 3,271 pounds
TRUNK: 7.4 cubic feet
EPA FUEL ECONOMY ESTIMATES: 19 mpg, city; 26 highway.
PRICE AS DRIVEN: $29,380 including destination charge

(c) 2008, Newsday

GM researching driverless cars

DETROIT (AP)—Cars that drive themselves—even parking at their destination—could be ready for sale within a decade, General Motors Corp. executives say.

GM, parts suppliers, university engineers and other automakers all are working on vehicles that could revolutionize short- and long-distance travel. And Tuesday at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas GM Chief Executive Rick Wagoner will devote part of his speech to the driverless vehicles.

"This is not science fiction," Larry Burns, GM's vice president for research and development, said in a recent interview.

The most significant obstacles facing the vehicles could be human rather than technical: government regulation, liability laws, privacy concerns and people's passion for the automobile and the control it gives them.

AP
In a photo provided by General Motors a red icon displayed indicates a vehicle is ahead on the road and has stopped, indicated by the triangle.

Much of the technology already exists for vehicles to take the wheel: radar-based cruise control, motion sensors, lane-change warning devices, electronic stability control and satellite-based digital mapping. And automated vehicles could dramatically improve life on the road, reducing crashes and congestion.

If people are interested.

"Now the question is what does society want to do with it?" Burns said. "You're looking at these issues of congestion, safety, energy and emissions. Technically there should be no reason why we can't transfer to a totally different world."

GM plans to use an inexpensive computer chip and an antenna to link vehicles equipped with driverless technologies. The first use likely would be on highways; people would have the option to choose a driverless mode while they still would control the vehicle on local streets, Burns said.

He said the company plans to test driverless car technology by 2015 and have cars on the road around 2018.

Sebastian Thrun, co-leader of the Stanford University team that finished second among six teams completing a 60-mile Pentagon-sponsored race of driverless cars in November, said GM's goal is technically attainable. But he said he wasn't confident cars would appear in showrooms within a decade.

Ford's EcoBoost engine excites marketer

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP)—Soon after Jim Farley became Ford Motor Co.'s marketing chief after a 17-year career at Toyota, he took a spin in a subcompact with Ford's new direct-injection, turbocharged engine.

"I couldn't wipe the smile off my face," Farley said. "I've never driven a Toyota like that, ever. The torque, out of that kind of displacement—in this case a 4-cylinder—was shocking."

It's a good thing he feels that way, because one of Farley's first and most critical assignments as vice president of global marketing will be to sell Ford's engine—dubbed EcoBoost—to buyers bewildered by the ever-growing options in vehicle technology.

Ford sees the EcoBoost four-cylinder and six-cylinder engines—which will be unveiled at this month's North American International Auto Show in Detroit—as a key part of its strategy to improve fuel economy in the near term, along with improved aerodynamics and lighter materials.

AP
Ford marketing chief Jim Farley is interviewed in his office in Dearborn, Mich., Thursday, Jan. 3, 2008.

The 2009 Lincoln MKS sedan, out later this year, will be the first Ford vehicle with EcoBoost as an option. Ford said EcoBoost will give the MKS's 3.5-liter, twin-turbocharged V6 the power and torque of a V8.

Life & Style

Spears, strike loom over film gala

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. (AP)—Britney Spears' hospitalization and concerns over whether the continuing Hollywood writers strike would keep next week's Golden Globes ceremony off the air dominated red-carpet chatter at the 2008 Palm Springs International Film Festival gala.

As honorees made their way through the media gauntlet Saturday at the year's first major entertainment-award event, many initially chirpy interviews quickly careened into talk about prospects for next week's Golden Globes broadcast.

"It's always sad when a program may have to be canceled," John Travolta, who was honored with an Ensemble Performance Award, told AP Television. "If it doesn't happen, we'll postpone it and do it another time."

A Globes telecast became increasingly unlikely after Friday's announcement by the Screen Actors Guild that its nominated members would not cross the Writers Guild of America's planned picket lines to get to the event.

Travolta

The actors guild, which represents most of the Globes' 72 acting-category contenders, made its announcement after the writers guild failed to reach a a so-called "interim agreement" with the award show's producers.

The fate of the Globes telecast should be clearer Monday, following a scheduled announcement by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which votes on the awards and hosts the show.

Many Globe nominees were in Palm Springs collecting statuettes from the film festival, including Daniel Day-Lewis (Desert Palm Achievement Award), Ellen Page (Chairman's Vanguard Award) and Travolta's "Hairspray" co-star Nikki Blonsky (Rising Star Award).

Blonsky said she was hoping and preparing for a last-minute resolution that would permit actors to attend the Globes.

"A girl's gotta cover her back and have a dress, just in case," she said.

French actress Marion Cotillard said she would not cross the picket line although she is not an actor's guild member because she believes writers deserve a greater share of the proceeds from productions they work on.

A grab bag of bizarre links

By JAKE COYLE
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

In the space of this column, we like to make room for any manner of Internet bizarre, from allegedly sexually deviant operatic R&B singers to chipmunks with gifts for the dramatic arts that happened in 2007.

But even dancing Wonder Women and Tetris-shaped Japanese game show contestants can be left out in the cold. To give them their due, here's a grab bag of Internet oddities last year.

NOW THAT'S AN ENTRANCE: Contemplating the greatest entrances of all time, your mind might drift to James Brown or Kramer. Pish. The title, by unanimous decision, goes to Tandi Iman Dupree. Either search her name on YouTube or click on this link, http://tinyurl.com/2gvjf7 , to watch Dupree enter the stage for the 2001 Miss Black America drag pageant. While Bonnie Tyler's "Holding Out for a Hero" plays, Dupree, dressed as Wonder Woman, drops from above the stage (and out of view), landing in a perfect leg split.

ANYTHING TO EAT? Even though we all usually know the contents of our refrigerators (we bought the groceries, after all), we can't help but stare inside, searching for something—anything decent—to eat. We're like moths drawn to that bright, white glow. Weirdly enough, there's a Web site devoted to this practice: http://www.fridgewatcher.com. The site is simply photos submitted from all over the world showing the interiors of people's fridges. One is reminded how every "Cribs" host is sure to exhibit his or her icebox. There must be some anthropologic reason behind this odd tradition. Perhaps it dates back to cavemen showing off their hunted meals—a slaughtered elk or something. Centuries later, though, this means bragging about how much Yoo-Hoo you've got stashed.

JAPAN IS ANOTHER WORLD: At the risk of sounding ethnocentric, Japanese pop culture is the craziest thing in the world. YouTube and the cable channel Spike TV have greatly increased the distribution for peculiar Japanese game shows. In particular, YouTube is a giant repository of clips from these shows, the king of which is "Human Tetris." Millions have watched clips of this show, where contestants attempt to contort themselves into Tetris-like shapes, or be pushed into a tepid pool: http://tinyurl.com/yq4mv9. They even play Pink Floyd's "The Wall" in the background. Judging a foreign society by its game shows probably isn't fair; after all, the United States doesn't come off too great in how its citizens react to the words "... a new car!"

SOUND OF SPUTNIK: The site http://www.spacesounds.com has been around for several years, but its out-of-this-world audio is, by nature, timeless. It hosts audio tracks of things like what the Russian satellite Sputnik sounds like, what you would hear if you passed through the rings of Saturn, and the "heartbeat" of the Sun—which sounds kinda like a Radiohead tune.

COMPUTER CARTOON: The notion of fictional characters coming alive and causing their creator headaches dates back, at least, to author Luigi Pirandello. But it hadn't properly been transplanted to computer animation until 18-year-old Ohio native Alan Becker drew a stick figure who refused to die. At his site, http://alanbecker.deviantart.com , you can find his flash creation: "Animator vs. Animation." The stick figure, named "victim," resolutely refuses destruction from his animator and uses everything at his disposal—Windows tools, the cloning feature—to save himself. In miniature form, he's Frankenstein 2.0.

In Celebration of her new life

†Rosa San Nicolas Camacho Borja

Lovingly known as Rosan Chandi

FEBRUARY 25, 1931 - JANUARY 03, 2008

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her:

Husband: Eugenio Arriola Borja

Children and Families:
Manuel & Angie (Geraldine/Frankie, Bernadine/Fernando, Esterlita/Felix, Rose/Vicente, Stephanie/Rufino Jr.)
Ignacio & Jacinta (Geraldine, Marylyn/Steven, Lorraine/Scott)
Eusebio & Margarita (Ann Margaret/Max, Eugene/Carol, Rose/Chris)
Auria & Jose (Georgia, Michelle)
Olivia & Agustin (Allen, Steven)
Francisco & Margaret (Jade, Rose Janet)
Flavia & Raymond (Peter Joe, Vanessa/Nick, Russel Eugene)
Ana/Almondo (Kasandra)
Vicente & Sachiko (Quiong Chai, Tacvon, Carter)

In Paradise, she now joins her:
Parents: Juan Muña Camacho
Maria San Nicolas Camacho
Parents-In-Law: Ignacio Diaz Camacho
Ana Cabrera Arriola
Grandson: Eusebio Junior Castro Borja
Great Grand Daughter: Ayanna Eusevia Castro Borja

She will also be missed by:
Brothers, Sisters and In-Laws:
Francisco SN. & Margaret Camacho
Mariano SN. & Marina Camacho
†Juan SN. Camacho
†Juana C. Babauta/Felix Babauta
†Victoria SN. Camacho
Maxima SN. Camacho
Maria C. Chaote/Don
Felipe SN. Camacho/You-Lian
Carlos A. Borja
Magdalena B. & †Antonio Palacios
Consolacion B. & †Jose Muña
Luise B./Gregorio Quitugua
Auren A. Borja
Josepha B. & †Calistro Ada
Scott A. Borja & Zenaida
Caregiver Evangeline Nate

Our beloved also leaves behind and will greatly missed by 38 great grand children.

Daily Mass of Intention is being celebrated at Santa Soledad Church Kagman at 6:00 p.m.
Holy Rosary is being prayed at the family residence in As Teo at 7:30 p.m.

On Friday, January 11, 2008, her remains will be escorted from Nuetra Señora dela Paz Memorial Chapel to Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 7:30 a.m. Responso Service will be at 8:00 a.m. followed by Holy Rosary. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. Interment Service will follow at Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

Please join us in prayers. Thank You - Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

EUGENIO A. BORJA, CHILDREN AND FAMILY

'Treasure' digs up $20M more in gold

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Nicolas Cage may be running out of storage room for his loot. Disney's "National Treasure: Book of Secrets," with Cage as a history buff on the trail of a lost city of gold, was the No. 1 box office draw for the third straight weekend with $20.2 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Three other hits crowded behind: Will Smith's sci-fi smash for Warner Bros., "I Am Legend," with $16.4 million; Fox Searchlight's teen-pregnancy comedy "Juno" with $16.2 million; and 20th Century Fox's family tale "Alvin and the Chipmunks" with $16 million.

"Book of Secrets" raised its domestic total to $171 million in three weeks, putting it just $2 million shy of the total that 2004's "National Treasure" rang up during its entire run.

"I Am Legend" has grossed $228.7 million, while "Alvin and the Chipmunks" has taken in $176.7 million.

The weekend's only new wide release, the Warner Bros. fright flick "One Missed Call," managed to pull in the horror-movie crowd despite universal loathing by critics. Starring Edward Burns and Shannyn Sossamon in a tale of people whose gruesome deaths are preceded by cell phone messages recording their final moments, the movie debuted at No. 5 with $13.5 million.

The first weekend of 2008 was promising for Hollywood, continuing a holiday box office surge that followed a weak fall season. The top 12 movies took in $123.9 million, up 18.5 percent from the first weekend of 2007.

Featuring a star-making turn from Ellen Page as a whip-smart pregnant teen, "Juno" has emerged as an independent film sensation, grabbing critical praise and building momentum as Hollywood's awards season progresses.

"It's the coolest little success story coming out of 2007," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box office tracker Media By Numbers. "It's playing like a mini-blockbuster right now."

The film has three nominations for Sunday's Golden Globes, among them best musical or comedy and an acting honor for Page.

With $52 million already in the bank, "Juno" is on its way to becoming Fox Searchlight's biggest hit ever, approaching "Little Miss Sunshine" at $59.9 million and "Sideways" at $71.5 million.

"Juno" started off in larger cities but now has caught fire in smaller towns such as Columbus, Ohio, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and Cedar Rapids, Iowa, said Peter Rice, Fox Searchlight president.

"The middle of the country has really embraced the movie. And I think the time of year has had a magnifying effect. All the top 10 lists," Rice said. "When the press writes that it's one of the best movies of the year combined with a movie people love, I think those are the defining factors."

Breaking into the top 10 as it expanded to more theaters was Focus Features' tragic romance "Atonement," which came in at No. 10 with $5.1 million.

"Atonement" leads the Golden Globe field with seven nominations, among them best drama and acting honors for Keira Knightley and James McAvoy.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. "National Treasure: Book of Secrets," $20.2 million.
2. "I Am Legend," $16.4 million.
3. "Juno," $16.2 million.
4. "Alvin and the Chipmunks," $16 million.
5. "One Missed Call," $13.5 million.
6. "Charlie Wilson's War," $8.2 million.
7. "P.S. I Love You," $8 million.
8. "The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep," $6.3 million.
9. "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street," $5.4 million.
10. "Atonement," $5.1 million.

AP

This undated photo released by Disney Enterprises, Inc. shows actors Diane Kruger (left,) Justin Bartha and Nicolas Cage in a scene from "National Treasure: Book of Secrets."

Leno, Kimmel to go on each other's shows

NEW YORK (AP)—For one night, Jay Leno and Jimmy Kimmel will solve the problem of booking guests during the writers' strike by appearing on each other's show.

The swap comes Thursday, with Kimmel traveling to Leno's studio in Burbank, Calif., and Leno returning the favor in Hollywood. Both shows are taped on the same day they air.

"There are only a few people in the world that know how tough this job is," Leno said Sunday. "Jimmy is one of them. It will be fun to discuss who's a good guest, who's a difficult guest and everything else that comes with sitting behind these desks."

Joked Kimmel: "If Jay and I can come together and guest on each other's shows, then surely there is hope for peace in the Middle East."

ABC's Kimmel came to Leno's defense on the air Wednesday, urging picketing writers to back off the "Tonight Show" host.

Both men's programs returned to the air last week without writers due to the ongoing strike by the Writers Guild of America. Their jobs were made even more difficult with the reluctance of stars to cross picket lines. The Screen Actors Guild has encouraged its members to appear on David Letterman's "Late Show" and Craig Ferguson's "Late Late Show," where writers have gone back to work.

AP

In this photo released by NBC, presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee talks with Jay Leno during the taping of "The Tonight Show" on Wednesday Jan. 2, 2008 in Burbank, Calif.

Leno's NBC "Tonight Show" featured comic Howie Mandel, host of NBC's "Deal or No Deal," on Thursday, with an animal expert and comedian on Friday.

Besides Kimmel, Leno's only other announced future guest is Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul on Monday night.

Kimmel's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" on Monday will feature Kathy Griffin and Scott Baio, two actors more popular recently on reality shows, and the rock band Velvet Revolver.

Without such booking problems, Letterman has lined up actors Tom Hanks, Lucy Liu and Morgan Freeman for shows this week.

Leno is involved in a separate dispute with the writers union. The guild contends Leno, who is a member, cannot write his own jokes and perform them in a monologue; Leno and NBC say the guild's own contract allows this. The writers have threatened disciplinary action against Leno, but a spokeswoman said Sunday no decision had been made on what to do.

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NOW SHOWING

One Missed Call

Friday		4:25	7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25	9:40
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:25	
Mon thru Thurs		4:25	7:25	

Ed Burns, Shannyn Sossamon
Horror, Remake • Rated PG13

Synopsis
Beth Raymond is traumatized when she witnesses the gruesome deaths of two friends just days apart. Even more disturbing, she knows that both of them had received chilling cell phone messages—actual recordings of their own horrifying last moments. Impossibly, the calls were received days before they died, but each death occurred precisely when and how the messages foretold.

The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep

Friday		4:20	7:30	9:50
Saturday	1:15	4:20	7:30	9:50
Sunday	1:15	4:20	7:30	
Mon thru Thurs		4:20	7:30	

Emily Watson, Ben Chaplin
Family, Adventure • Rated PG

Synopsis
When Angus, a young Scottish boy, finds an enchanted egg, he takes it home and soon finds himself face-to-face with an amazing creature: the mythical "water horse" of Scottish lore. Angus begins a journey of discovery, facing his greatest fears and risking his life to protect a secret that would give birth to a legend.

National Treasure: Book of Secrets

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:45
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:45
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Mon thru Thurs		4:00	7:00	

Nicolas Cage, Diane Kruger
Action, Adventure • Rated PG

Charlie Wilson's War

Friday		4:10	7:15	9:30
Saturday	1:20	4:10	7:15	9:30
Sunday	1:20	4:10	7:15	
Mon thru Thurs		4:10	7:15	

Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts
Comedy, Biopic • Rated R

Walk Hard: Dewey Cox Story

Friday		@	7:05	9:55
Saturday	@	@	7:05	9:55
Sunday	@	@	7:05	
Mon thru Thurs		@	7:05	

John C. Reilly, Jenna Fischer
Comedy, Music • Rated R

P.S. I Love You

Friday		4:30	@	@
Saturday	1:30	4:30	@	@
Sunday	1:30	4:30	@	
Mon thru Thurs		4:30	@	

Hilary Swank, Gerald Butler
Drama, Adaptation • Rated PG13

I Am Legend

Friday		4:15	7:20	10:00
Saturday	1:10	4:15	7:20	10:00
Sunday	1:10	4:15	7:20	
Mon thru Thurs		4:15	7:20	

Will Smith, Alice Braga
Action, Sci-Fi, Adventure • Rated PG13

Alvin & The Chipmunks

Friday		4:05	7:10	9:35
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:10	9:35
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:10	
Mon thru Thurs		4:05	7:10	

Jason Lee, Cameron Richardson
Comedy, Family • Rated PG

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Black and wife expecting another baby

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Funnyman Jack Black has another reason to smile.

His wife, Tanya Haden, is pregnant with their second child, he said.

"Yes, she's expecting," Black said at a Beverly Hills hotel during a press day for his latest project, "Be Kind Rewind," People magazine reported Saturday on its Web site.

He declined to offer more details.

Black and Haden, a cellist and the daughter of jazz great Charlie Haden, were married in 2006. They have a 1 1/2-year-old son.

Black said he employs a "day-by-day" strategy to parenting.

"I've been told that two children is three times as hard as one child, but then strangely three children is easier than one," he joked.

Black's films credits include "The School of Rock" and "King Kong," and he's a member of the band Tenacious D.

Actor Jack Black poses at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles in this June, 2006 file photo. AP

Napster to sell music as MP3 files

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Napster Inc. said Sunday it will begin selling music downloads as unprotected MP3 files in the spring, joining other online retailers.

The file format change will apply only to single tracks and album purchases, according to a company press release. Tracks downloaded as part of the company's music subscription service will continue to have copyright restrictions.

Unlike music files that come with copy protections embedded, MP3 files are compatible with most portable music devices, including Apple Inc.'s market-leading iPod media players, Microsoft Corp.'s Zune and mobile phones that play music.

"The ubiquity and cross-platform compatibility of MP3s should create a more level playing field for music services and hardware providers and result in greater ease of use and broader adoption of digital music," Chris Gorog, Napster's chairman and chief executive, said in a statement.

The company did not say which record companies had agreed to license music for sale as MP3s via Napster.

Three of the world's biggest recording companies—Vivendi's Universal Music Group, Warner Music Group Corp. and Britain's EMI Group PLC—cleared the way last year for some online retailers, including Amazon.com, to sell their artists' music as unprotected MP3 files.

Many analysts expect the fourth major recording company, Sony BMG Music Entertainment, to follow suit this year.

Napster, which offers a la carte downloads and a monthly unlimited music subscription plan with the option to transfer copy-protected tracks to certain devices, said it would continue to focus primarily on its subscription business.

The company recently told subscribers that it will increase fees on its basic subscription plan from $9.95 to $12.95 a month beginning Jan. 30. It gave existing subscribers the option to lock in the lower monthly fee if they pay for a full year in advance.

Napster did not change the $14.95 monthly fee for its top subscription tier.

SUNRISE FESTIVAL AP

Children are silhouetted as they play in front of a giant bonfire during the 20th annual Sunrise festival in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, Canada, Sunday, Jan. 6, 2008. The festival welcomes the return of the sun after the long darkness of mid-winter.

CBS News: New a.m. look for affiliates

NEW YORK (AP)—CBS News is asking dozens of its affiliates to take a leap of faith in the morning.

The network relaunches "The Early Show" Monday with a new set, a new leader and an end to the "blended" format where some 43 stations—covering 20 percent of the country—ditched much of the national feed for its own local programming.

With the changes, CBS News executives believe they will finally have a shot at the titanic task of challenging the morning news leaders at NBC's "Today" show and ABC's "Good Morning America."

For many affiliates, it's a risky leap. It means giving up on a format where they led or were competitive in the ratings at 7 a.m. in favor of a network show that has been No. 3 for decades, no matter what CBS has tried to do differently.

Scott Blumenthal, chairman of the CBS affiliate board, is an executive at Lin Broadcasting, which owns a station in Buffalo that is No. 1 in the morning ratings and another in Indianapolis that is No. 2.

He understands the CBS point of view. The blended format, where stations didn't join the network feed until after 18 minutes of local news, robs "The Early Show" of a chance to establish its own identity and limits its flexibility.

"Does that make me any less nervous about possibly losing some audience and revenue?" Blumenthal said. "No, but we're going to make a go of it."

"The Early Show" format retains host Harry Smith, who has quietly become a CBS News stalwart and chief substitute in the evening for Katie Couric. He's joined by veteran Julie Chen and newcomer Maggie Rodriguez, who worked in Miami local news for seven years and served a brief apprenticeship at CBS' weekend morning news before moving to "The Early Show" in December. Rodriguez replaced Hannah Storm.

Sister is right to roll up welcome mat at cottage

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I completely agree with your reply to "Sorry No Vacancy" (Nov. 2), advising the writer to stand her ground regarding the vacation house. It appears she was raised in a household with brothers who were used to bossing their sister around, and a mother who allowed the boys to do it.

They had their chance to work on the house, but lacked the vision and work ethic their sister had. They sold her their share and contributed nothing to the final result. They have no right to now claim ownership privileges. If the mother thinks her sons need a second home to vacation in, she should pass out keys to her own house.

As you may have guessed, I grew up in a home where boys were more valued than girls, and I remember how hard it was to strive for equal respect.

—KATHRYN B., BETHEL, ARK.

DEAR KATHRYN: Many readers had the same reaction as yours: The problem is the brothers' greed, and the "key" to her dilemma should be to remove the welcome mat. "Sorry" should enjoy her vacation home because she deserves to. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: "Sorry's" situation reminded me of the story of "The Little Red Hen," in which the cat, dog and mouse slept all day while the little red hen planted, sowed, watered and milled the grain. Then when the bread was baked, the dog, cat and mouse all wanted to "help" eat it. The little red hen wouldn't give them one bite because she had done all the work.

Those jealous brothers need to back off and let their sister have her house. I wouldn't even invite them for a picnic. Perhaps then they'd learn their lesson like the animals in that famous children's story.

Stick to your guns, girl!

—HOPING YOU DO IN WASHINGTON

DEAR ABBY: I am a retired banker and have dealt with a number of family situations similar to the one in "Sorry's" letter. Her brothers are deadbeats. They are more than happy to enjoy the benefits of the completed project, but were nowhere to be found when the planning, expense and work were being done.

"Sorry" has tried to handle this correctly from the beginning. Each brother was given the opportunity of equal ownership. They all opted to take the money and run.

What "Sorry" should do now is what she did in the beginning: have the property appraised in its improved condition, then offer to let each brother buy—at current market value—an equal position or buy the property in full.

By the way, I have never seen one deadbeat pay up. These guys ran the first time, and they'll run again. People like them always do.

—BOB B., DESTIN, FLA.

DEAR ABBY: Years ago, our family cottage passed on to the second generation. It was rundown and needed costly repairs and renovations. My husband and I lived closest to it; consequently, we won the "work lottery."

I made my brothers an offer through an attorney: "I'll pay each of you your fair share of the assessed value of the cottage, and you will always be welcome for overnight visits." Everyone agreed, and my checks were sent out. It has been a grand open house ever since—reunions, parties, etc. Twenty years have passed, generations of relatives still come and go, and I couldn't be happier.

—VISITORS WELCOME IN WISCONSIN

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

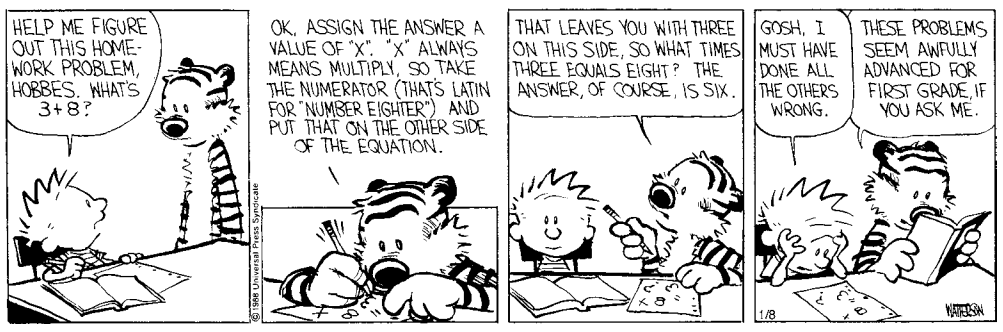
■ ■ ■

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

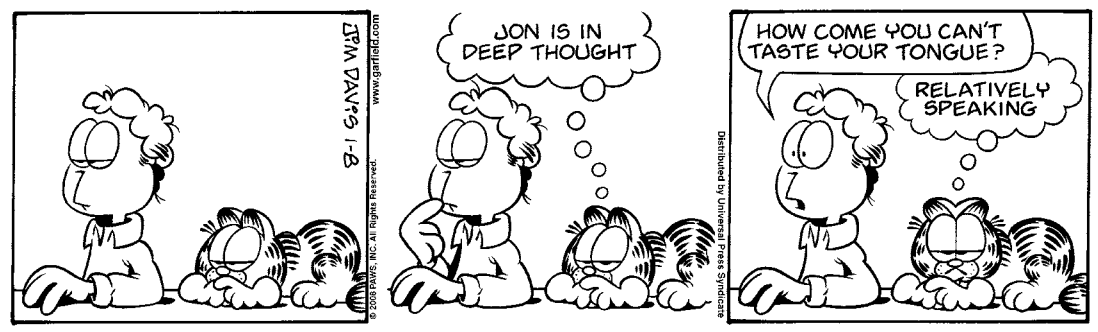
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


HELP ME FIGURE OUT THIS HOME-WORK PROBLEM, HOBBES. WHAT'S 3+8?
OK, ASSIGN THE ANSWER A VALUE OF "X". "X" ALWAYS MEANS MULTIPLY, SO TAKE THE NUMERATOR (THAT'S LATIN FOR "NUMBER EIGHTER") AND PUT THAT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EQUATION.
THAT LEAVES YOU WITH THREE ON THIS SIDE, SO WHAT TIMES THREE EQUALS EIGHT? THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS SIX.
GOSH, I MUST HAVE DONE ALL THE OTHERS WRONG.
THESE PROBLEMS SEEM AWFULLY ADVANCED FOR FIRST GRADE, IF YOU ASK ME.
1/8
WATTERSON

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


JIM DAVIS 1-8
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JON IS IN DEEP THOUGHT
HOW COME YOU CAN'T TASTE YOUR TONGUE?
RELATIVELY SPEAKING
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

With the Holidays behind you, it's time to begin that new diet and exercise regimen you've been talking about.
1/8
BRIAN BASSET ©2005 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE
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The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WHAT'CHA WRITING?
I'M MAKING OUT A SHOPPING LIST.
HOW MANY "O"s ARE THERE IN "CHEERIO'S"?
HMMM... MY GUESS WOULD BE ABOUT SIX HUNDRED.
1-8
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GLENN MCCOY
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CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

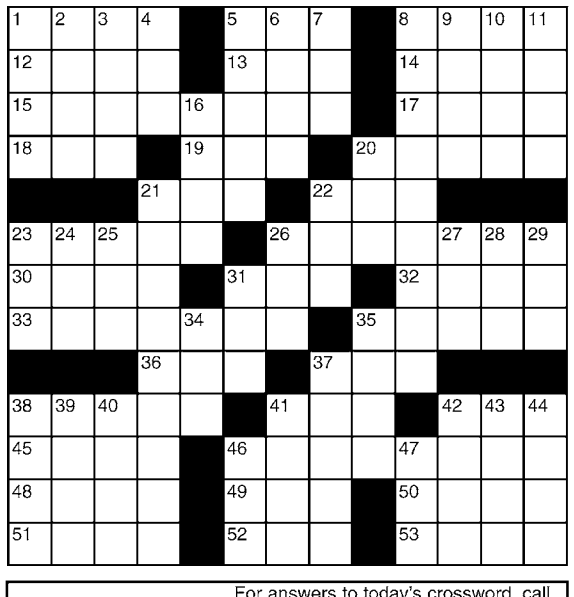
ACROSS
1 Information
5 English channel?
8 Pear or apple
12 Jacob's brother
13 Mound stat
14 Footnote abbr.
15 Tonic
17 "The Da Vinci —"
18 Mr. Sajak
19 Frequently, in verse
20 Flock in flight
21 Use a crowbar
22 Miler Sebastian
23 Yeltsin's successor
26 Reckless travel
30 Grand-scale tale
31 Annoy
32 PC picture
33 Stopped the ball carrier
35 Massage
36 Nosh
37 Leprechauns' dance
38 Failed the white-glove test
41 Grumpy friend?
42 Foolish one
45 Sea eagle
46 Walleye
48 Culture medium
49 Noah's craft
50 Bigfoot's cousin
51 Stamina
52 "Of course"
53 It's right on the map

DOWN
1 Portrayer of Wood, Todd and Wonka
2 One side of the Urals
3 Diplomacy
4 Diving bird
5 Strong and heavy
6 Very dry, as champagne
7 Upper limit
8 "My Fair Lady" colonel
9 Reed instrument
10 Calf-length
11 Paradise
16 Early hours
20 Tofu provider
21 They're a striking group
22 "Friends" cast member
23 Favorite
24 "— lazy river, ..."
25 Spasm
26 Clampett patriarch
27 Lemieux milieu
28 — good deed
29 Conclusion
31 Old soldier
34 Deposit
35 Punt
37 Athletes
38 Option from Howie Mandel
39 Incite
40 Unseen problem
41 Tragic
42 Vicinity
43 Collections
44 Sexy skirt feature
46 Remuneration
47 Storm center

Solution time: 21 mins.

J	I	B			B	U	M		I	T	E	M
O	R	E	O		E	T	A		N	O	V	A
K	I	E	V		T	A	X		S	P	E	D
E	S	T	E	S		H	I	F	I			
			R	O	D		M	O	D	E	R	N
P	I	C	A	D	O	R		G	E	N	I	E
O	R	A	N		C	U	E		A	I	D	S
R	O	D	D	Y		B	L	O	N	D	E	S
E	N	S	U	E	D		F	A	D			
			N	A	I	L		K	O	O	K	S
O	P	E	D		D	I	P		U	N	I	T
F	I	R	E		D	N	A		T	U	N	A
F	E	A	R		Y	E	W		S	K	Y	

Yesterday's answer 1-8



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Ryan Francis, 31; Ami Dolenz, 39; R. Kelly, 41; David Bowie, 61

Happy Birthday: Stay calm and in control and you will win. Let your emotions take over and confusion will set in. This can be a very rewarding year for you if you keep your wits about you and don't overextend, overspend or overdo. If someone offers you something too good to be true, turn it down and rely on your own abilities to further your interests. Your numbers are 4, 10, 18, 27, 31, 36

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't be fooled by what others are doing. If you are wasting time on things that don't turn a profit, readjust your schedule. Don't let emotional issues stand in the way of your advancement. Size up the situation and offer suggestions. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You are in control and can make things happen, so don't be too eager to follow someone else's lead. Much can be put into play that will set the stage for a good year. Don't expect help and you won't be disappointed. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): The more you can do to promote, present and learn, the better off you will be. There is plenty to gain from the experience you encounter and a lesson to be learned from your spending habits in the past. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Emotions will be difficult to control. You will be torn between what you want to do and what you need to do. Don't fret—just work quickly and try to fit both into your day. Change is good, so stop running away from it. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): An older friend will shed some light on a professional situation you face. Listen and abide by the rules and you will spare yourself some setbacks. Love and romance are looking positive. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): All work and no play will get you down and probably lead nowhere today. Show your fun side and you will be admired for your well-rounded personality and ability to get things done. Mix business with pleasure. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You'll be anxious to get things out of the way. Rely on friends to help you see personal matters clearly so you don't make a mistake. Put your energy into a new hobby or creative pursuit. Children may play an instrumental role. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Travel or attending a seminar or event that you can benefit from will give you the strength and encouragement to promote and present whatever project you are currently working on. Be true to yourself. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Stop fooling yourself into thinking that everyone else is at fault. Check out what you can do to make the year ahead more prosperous. Someone will put you in your place if you exaggerate. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): There is a perfect opportunity in the works. You can sign a deal or contract or invest in something sure to make a profit. You can manipulate situations if you maintain a reserved and quiet manner. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Make your plans and stick to them. Love is on the rise and new developments can be made if you have a serious talk regarding your intentions, ideas and future plans. Don't get too preoccupied by what others are doing. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You can ask for favors but only if you have been willing to help others first. Get involved in activities geared toward reform. The people you meet along the way will benefit you greatly in the future. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are inventive and imaginative. You have a sense of fair play and a self-reliant quality that helps you land on your feet. You don't forget or forgive easily but you adapt quickly.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		1				6		
	7		3		6		4	
6				4				5
	6			2			7	
		4	9		7	1		
	3			5			2	
8				7				3
	2		6		4		1	
		3				7		

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/08

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	8	7	1	6	4	3	9	2
3	1	6	2	8	9	5	7	4
4	2	9	7	3	5	1	8	6
9	4	1	3	5	7	6	2	8
6	3	2	9	1	8	4	5	7
7	5	8	4	2	6	9	1	3
2	9	5	8	4	3	7	6	1
1	7	4	6	9	2	8	3	5
8	6	3	5	7	1	2	4	9

Difficulty Level ★ 1/07

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

WEEKEND GETAWAYS **Solution: 7 letters**

S	G	N	I	N	N	A	T	N	E	T	G	C	R	B
R	E	A	D	A	R	T	H	T	R	U	O	F	E	A
S	N	I	T	A	U	A	N	A	E	L	C	A	V	N
T	O	U	T	D	O	O	R	S	L	O	W	I	O	D
N	R	E	C	I	T	B	T	A	D	A	O	R	I	S
E	T	A	T	A	V	S	V	I	S	I	T	S	T	T
V	H	S	F	A	M	I	L	Y	L	U	J	R	A	R
E	E	B	K	F	N	P	T	O	S	L	E	E	P	O
R	K	E	L	R	I	R	I	C	O	T	N	I	A	P
E	A	A	A	P	A	C	K	N	A	P	R	L	M	S
P	L	C	W	P	O	R	H	W	G	S	H	O	(P)	R
A	N	H	D	O	O	F	K	O	K	B	N	U	(L)	E
I	T	I	S	W	I	M	O	O	R	D	A	N	(A)	L
R	T	K	A	S	A	N	O	S	A	E	S	G	(Y)	A
S	G	E	H	R	E	B	C	Y	C	A	S	E	S	X

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Activities, Bags, Bands, Beach, Boat, Books, Camping, Carnival, Case, Chores, Clean, Cook, Events, Fair, Family, Fish, Food, Fourth, Guests, Hike, July, Lake, Lounge, Monday, Nature, North, Outdoors, Over, Pack, Paint, Party, Patio, Play, Pool, Rain, Rate, Read, Relax, Repairs, Rest, Road, Season, Shop, Sleep, Slow, Sports, Stroll, Swim, Tanning, Tent, Tour, Traffic, Visits, Walk, Water, Work

Yesterday's Answer: Penalty

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CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*

• 1st position	$10
• 2nd position	$3
• Succeeding positions	$1

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

Combo (Print and Online)*

• 1st position	$13
• 2nd position	$4
• Succeeding positions	$2

Radio (KCNM/KZMI)

• Up to 6 positions	$5
• More than 6 positions	$10

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:

- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

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AGENDA

I. ROLL CALL
II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
III. PUBLIC COMMENTS
IV. NEW BUSINESS
A. Quarterly Money Managers' Meeting, 3rd Quarter – 2007
V. EXECUTIVE SESSION
VI. NEXT MEETING
VII. ADJOURNMENT

/s/ JUAN T. GUERRERO
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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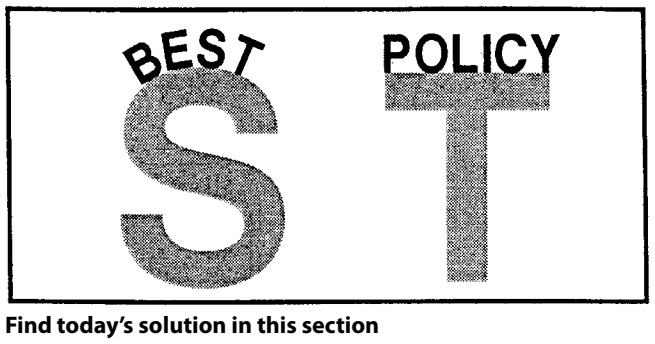

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The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, has a full-time position vacancy for a Receptionist / Collections Assistant. The successful candidate must be a US citizen or IR, be a high school graduate, and have good English language and bookkeeping skills. Duties will include greeting visitors to the Office, answering the telephone, assisting with the Firm's collections practice, and other related duties.
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235-NEWS

NY Giants' road show surges past Bucs

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—The New York Giants' rousing road show powered through Tampa Bay. Now it heads to the only place where it flopped: Dallas. The Giants moved to 8-1 away from home with a dominating 24-14 NFC-wild-card playoff victory over Tampa Bay on Sunday.

New York has won every road game since falling in its season opener against the Cowboys, and it gets a chance to diminish that blemish in a much bigger matchup next Sunday, with the winner going to the conference title game.

"We love playing there, we love going down to Dallas," Eli Manning said. "There are no secrets."

As for concerns the Giants (11-6) left too much of themselves on the field in futilely trying to stop New England's perfect season on Dec. 29, well, forget it. After a lackluster first quarter, New York bullied the NFC South champions, who lost three of their last four regular-season games, including the final two when coach Jon Gruden rested many starters.

"We weren't sluggish, but it was not like we were the week before," said receiver Amani Toomer, who had a big game. "We needed one play to get us going and for me to be the guy, I was excited."

It was the first postseason win for Manning, who efficiently outplayed his counterpart, Jeff Garcia. Manning went 20-for-27 for 185 yards, with almost all the damage coming after a forgettable opening period in which New York had minus-2 yards of offense.

The oft-criticized Manning should draw nothing but praise for his performance, which included touchdown passes of 5 yards to Brandon Jacobs and 4 to Toomer. The score by Toomer was his seventh catch of the day and completed a clinching 92-yard, 15-play drive.

"Eli had a great game today," Toomer said. "He took what was out there and didn't force anything. He doesn't get real excited; there is more than one way to lead a team ... and he showed that today."

New York's defense was led by cornerback Corey Webster's interception and fumble recovery, and Michael Strahan's nine tackles and a sack. Tampa Bay (9-8) gained only 166 yards before a late 88-yard drive made it 24-14.

Jacobs also had an 8-yard TD run for the Giants, while Lawrence Tynes kicked a 25-yard field goal.

Earnest Graham ran for a 1-yard touchdown and Alex Smith had a 6-yard scoring reception for the Bucs, who have not won a postseason game since the Super Bowl in January 2003.

The first quarter was so lopsided that the Giants never picked up a first down. Meanwhile, Garcia, who beat the Giants in two previous playoff starts against them, led the Bucs on a 54-yard, 10-play march. It was highlighted by Graham, who capped it with a 1-yard TD run. Graham gained 41 yards on the drive.

But when the second quarter arrived, the visitors woke up. Manning found Toomer for 17-, 10- and 13-yard gains before Jacobs avoided Derrick Brooks to tie it on his 5-yard reception.

Six minutes later, New York led as Jacobs scored on an 8-yard run. Manning completed all four passes on the 65-yard drive, including a 21-yarder to Steve Smith on third down.

By halftime, the flag-waving Bucs fans had been silenced by the power running and precise passing of the Giants, who were up 14-7.

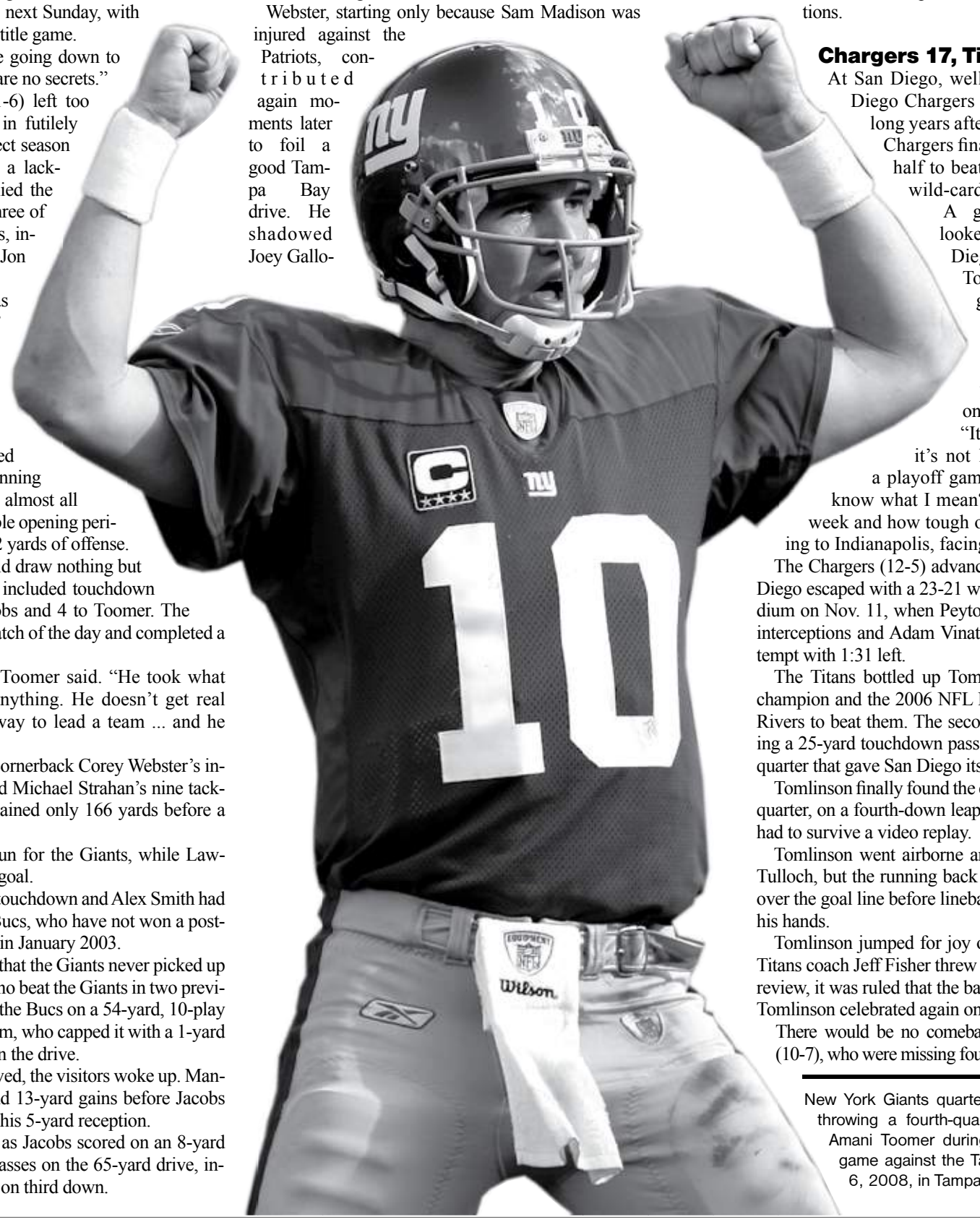
It got worse immediately for the locals when Micheal Spurlock, the only Buc to return a kickoff for a touchdown in their four decades, fumbled his runback to open the second half. Webster recovered at the Tampa 30 and the Giants got to the 4 before Tynes made his field goal.

Webster, starting only because Sam Madison was injured against the Patriots, contributed again moments later to foil a good Tampa Bay drive. He shadowed Joey Gallo-way to the end zone and picked off Garcia's weak pass.

"That was a bad decision by me," Garcia admitted. "I was just trying to make a play and Webster had very good coverage on the play."

The Bucs, who led the NFC with a plus-15 turnover margin, were minus-2 in a span of 8:50 of the third period and never recovered.

Garcia wound up 23-of-39 for 207 yards and two interceptions.



New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning celebrates after throwing a fourth-quarter touchdown pass to teammate Amani Toomer during an NFL wild-card football playoff game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Sunday, Jan 6, 2008, in Tampa, Fla.

AP

Chargers 17, Titans 6

At San Diego, well, wouldn't you know it, the San Diego Chargers can win in the playoffs. Thirteen long years after their last postseason victory, the Chargers finally came to life late in the second half to beat the Tennessee Titans in an AFC wild-card game.

A gloomy, rainy afternoon never looked so good in normally sunny San Diego. Star running back LaDainian Tomlinson was held to 42 yards, but got to celebrate the first playoff victory in three tries in his brilliant seven-year career.

"It didn't come easy, but I tell you, I'm just happy to get that first one," Tomlinson said.

"It's a relief, but at the same time, it's not like we're saying, 'OK, we won a playoff game, so let's get ready to lose,' you know what I mean? I'm already thinking about next week and how tough of a game we're going to have going to Indianapolis, facing the champs."

The Chargers (12-5) advance to face the Colts on Sunday. San Diego escaped with a 23-21 win over the Colts at Qualcomm Stadium on Nov. 11, when Peyton Manning threw a career-high six interceptions and Adam Vinatieri missed a 29-yard field goal attempt with 1:31 left.

The Titans bottled up Tomlinson, the two-time NFL rushing champion and the 2006 NFL MVP, and dared quarterback Philip Rivers to beat them. The second-year starter did just that, throwing a 25-yard touchdown pass to Vincent Jackson late in the third quarter that gave San Diego its first lead at 10-6.

Tomlinson finally found the end zone midway through the fourth quarter, on a fourth-down leap over the pile from inside the 1 that had to survive a video replay.

Tomlinson went airborne and was met by linebacker Stephen Tulloch, but the running back used a second effort to get the ball over the goal line before linebacker Colin Allred knocked it out of his hands.

Tomlinson jumped for joy once he emerged from the pile, but Titans coach Jeff Fisher threw his red challenge flag. After a video review, it was ruled that the ball crossed the plane of the goal line. Tomlinson celebrated again on the sideline.

There would be no comeback for Vince Young and the Titans (10-7), who were missing four offensive starters due to injuries.

Roger Clemens open to lie-detector test

NEW YORK (AP)—Sounding indignant and defiant in his first interview since his former personal trainer accused him of using steroids, Roger Clemens seemed to set up a confrontation with Brian McNamee in front of Congress if the pair testify under oath at a Jan. 16 hearing.

Clemens said during a segment broadcast on CBS's "60 Minutes" Sunday night that he might be willing to take a lie-detector test and was "shocked" close friend Andy Pettitte used human growth hormone. He said—again—that he probably will retire.

The seven-time Cy Young Award winner, a fiery look in his eyes and stubble on his face, told CBS's Mike Wallace that he would have spoken with baseball drug investigator George Mitchell had he been aware McNamee accused him of using steroids and HGH.

Clemens, the most prominent player implicated in last month's Mitchell Report, steadfastly maintained his innocence and called McNamee's allegations "totally false."

"If he's doing that to me, I should have a third ear coming out of my forehead. I should be pulling tractors with my teeth," said Clemens, who wore a lavender button-down shirt during the interview, taped Dec. 28 at his home in Katy, Texas.

"I thought it was an impassioned, disingenuous and desperate plea," said Earl Ward, McNamee's primary lawyer.

Said Clemens' attorney, Rusty Hardin: "Anyone not persuaded by that interview is not a well person."

On Friday, when the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform invited Clemens and McNamee to testify, the pair spoke by telephone, an individual close to the situation said, speaking on condition of anonymity because public comments weren't authorized. The conversation first was reported Sunday by Newsday.

The individual would not say what was discussed.

One of the few revelations in the much-hyped interview came when Clemens was asked whether he could conceivably take a lie detector test.

"Yeah," he answered. "I don't know if they're good or bad."

Clemens is scheduled to hold a news conference Monday in Houston, part of his campaign to clear his name. Next up is the congressional hearing. Pettitte, former Yankees teammate Chuck Knoblauch and former Mets clubhouse attendant Kirk Radomski, who allegedly supplied McNamee with performance-enhancing drugs, also were asked to appear before the committee.

Lawyers for Clemens and McNamee have said their clients are willing to testify but Hardin wouldn't commit to the date.

Richard Emery, another of McNamee's lawyers, said he would welcome testimony from Clemens.

"If Congress calls him, he pretty much has to take the Fifth, and if he takes the Fifth, nobody will ever believe him again and all this effort has gone down the drain," Emery said. "And if he doesn't take the Fifth, it's very hard to imagine that a prosecutor isn't going to pursue this. So I think he's put himself in a terrible corner."

Clemens said his lawyer advised him not to speak with Mitchell, who spent 20 months on his investigation.

"If I would've known what this man, what Brian McNamee (had) said in this report, I would have been down there in a heartbeat to take care of it," Clemens said.

Only two active players, Jason Giambi and Frank Thomas, spoke with Mitchell, a Boston Red Sox director and a former Senate majority leader.

Chopra tops Stricker in Mercedes playoff

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP)—All those times watching the Mercedes-Benz Championship on television and playing the Plantation Course at Kapalua on a video game could never have prepared Daniel Chopra for his wild playoff victory Sunday.

He twice blew chances to win the tournament on the 18th hole.

He got out of one jam when his chip settled into a sprinkler cup, and he might have avoided another one when Steve Stricker's long putt on the first playoff hole was slowed by hitting Chopra's ball mark. Two birdie putts in the playoff were held up by a blade of grass.

A long, nail-biting start to the PGA Tour finally ended as the sun dipped below the Pacific's horizon when Chopra two-putted for birdie on the par-5 ninth to beat Stricker in four extra holes.

Chopra, who only qualified for this winners-only tournament with his first PGA Tour victory in the second-to-last event of last year, closed with a 7-under 66 and walked off with a number of prizes.

The Swede earned $1.1 million and a Mercedes-Benz sports car. And his victory earned him his first trip to the Masters.

"I get to go to Augusta, my lifelong dream," Chopra said.

Stricker also had a birdie putt that grazed the lip on the third playoff hole, but on the next hole, he pulled his fairway metal on his approach to the par-5 ninth, chipped 15 feet by the cup and missed the putt that would have sent them to the 18th for a third time.

But it was a valiant comeback for the two-time PGA Tour comeback player of the year. Stricker birdied three of his last four holes to close with a 64 and force a playoff.

"Building blocks," Stricker said as his voice started to choke, this time more out of disappointment than raw emotion.

It was the first PGA Tour playoff for both of them, although Chopra lost in a playoff to Aaron Baddeley in November at the Australian Masters. Momentum shifted on just about every shot, as both players had excellent chances to win.

On the first extra hole on the par-5 18th, Stricker putted from 120 feet away just off the green when his ball hit Chopra's large ball mark and took a big hop, losing so much speed that it stopped nearly 10 feet short of the hole. He missed the birdie putt.

Stricker realized the mark was somewhere around his line, but figured odds were low he would hit it.

Turned out he was wrong.

"It wasn't a coin," he said. "In hindsight, I should have had him mark with a penny. It took a lot of speed off. But you learn from that."

Chopra had a 12-foot birdie putt on the 18th in regulation to win, but it stopped an inch short. In the playoff, he left his eagle putt some 7 feet short and missed that one to the right, a scene that began to look familiar.

His 25-foot birdie on No. 1, the second playoff hole, looked so good that Chopra raised his putter and began to celebrate, then dropped to his knees and let the putter fall from his hands when the ball stopped on the edge of the cup. The second hole was Stricker's turn to win, and his 15-foot putt just turned away.

Chopra essentially won the tournament with a fairway metal to about 25 feet for eagle, and when that putt again was held up a a blade of Bermuda grass, he must have figured it was not meant for him to win.

"It felt like there was a goalie in the hole," Chopra said.

But it didn't matter when Stricker's chip came out too hot and the birdie putt stayed left of the cup all the way.

Chopra had the experience on the bag of Mitch Knox, who was the caddie for David Duval when he won at Kapalua by nine shots in 1999. And maybe it was just a coincidence that Knox wore a Masters cap to shield sunshine that was long overdue on the west coast of Maui.

Both players finished at 18-under 274 for the second playoff in three years at Kapalua, which would have surprised no one at the start of a final round in which a dozen players were separated by four shots.

Chopra seized control early, however, and he looked like a winner all the way in regulation, especially after running off three straight birdies to build a three-shot lead with five holes to play.

Then came Stricker's amazing charge, culminating with a 10-foot birdie on the final hole. Stricker took only eight putts over the final eight holes, which includes holing out from the fairway on the 12th for eagle.

"I was so impressed how well he was chasing," Chopra said.

Stephen Ames closed with a 66 to finish one shot out of the playoff. Mike Weir, who lost his one-shot lead on the first hole and didn't make a birdie until No. 9, rallied too late on the back nine and shot 70 to finish two shots behind.

"I'm not going to beat myself up," Weir said. "I played well. Just a bad start."

Chopra might say he won the tournament by holing out on the 15th, where a bad break followed an enormously good one.

His second shot hit the green and rolled 20 feet past the hole, but caught enough of a ridge that it tumbled off the steep slope of the green. Chopra's first chip was too heavy and was about to roll back to his feet when it landed in the circular depression of a sprinkler head.

That allowed him to place the ball next to the sprinkler and putt, instead of chip, his fourth. He got out of there with par to keep his one-shot margin over Stricker. In the end, every shot mattered.

AP

Daniel Chopra, of Sweden, poses with his trophy on the 18th green of the Plantation Course after winning the Mercedes-Benz Championship golf tournament in Kapalua, Hawaii, Sunday, Jan. 6, 2008.

James comes alive in 4th as Cavaliers rally to beat Raptors

TORONTO (AP)—LeBron James scored 39 points, including 24 in the fourth quarter, to help the Cleveland Cavaliers rally for a 93-90 victory over the Toronto Raptors in the NBA on Sunday.

Trailing 70-57 to begin the fourth quarter, James gave Cleveland its first lead at 79-76 with a 3-pointer from the right wing with 3:59 left.

Two free throws by Jose Calderon and a layup from Jamario Moon tied it at 84, but James made a layup and Daniel Gibson hit a wide-open 3 from the corner to put Cleveland up by five.

Chris Bosh led Toronto with 23 points, Anthony Parker had 20 and Calderon had 16 points and 11 assists.

Wizards 108, SuperSonics 86

At Washington, Caron Butler scored 31 points and Antawn Jamison had 21 points and 12 rebounds for Washington's win over Seattle.

It was Butler's third game of 30 or more points, and the second consecutive game the Wizards won by more than 20—the first time that's happened since December 2004.

Antonio Daniels had 13 points and 10 assists for Washington.

It was a homecoming for two Sonics starters: Kevin Durant, the second pick in June's NBA draft, had 19 points, and Jeff Green finished with eight points.

Spurs 88, Clippers 82

At Los Angeles, Tim Duncan had 17 points and 17 rebounds, Tony Parker scored 26 points and San Antonio beat Los Angeles.

Manu Ginobili, back for San Antonio after missing five games with a sprained left index finger, scored 12 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter.

Michael Finley made just one of his 10 shots, but had 11 rebounds as the Spurs beat the Clippers for the eighth time in a row.

Los Angeles made a game of it though, playing solid defense and getting 20 points and 14 rebounds from Chris Kaman, and 17 points and eight boards from rookie Al Thornton. Corey Maggette had 14 points.

Grizzlies 101, Heat 94

At Memphis, Tennessee, Pau Gasol had 28 points and 13 rebounds, Mike Miller added 25 points, and Memphis sent Miami to its seventh straight loss.

Memphis outscored Miami 9-2 in the final 2 minutes.

Rudy Gay finished with 22 points for Memphis, and Mike Conley scored 11.

Ricky Davis had a season-high 24 points to lead Miami. Dwyane Wade, coming off the bench, finished with 18 points.

Chris Quinn scored 17 for the Heat, while Udonis Haslem added 14 points and grabbed 12 rebounds.

Mavericks 101, Timberwolves 78

At Minneapolis, Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas in scoring for the ninth straight game, scoring 30 points, and the Mavericks handed Minnesota its eighth consecutive loss.

Josh Howard added 22 points and eight rebounds for the Mavericks, who led by as many as 31 points en route to their fourth win in a row and ninth in their last 11.

Al Jefferson had 16 points and 11 rebounds for the lackluster Timberwolves, who delivered an uninspired performance despite not having won a game since Dec. 21.

Bucks 93, Bobcats 89

At Charlotte, North Carolina, reserve Charlie Bell scored 27 points and Andrew Bogut added 25, including a short hook shot with 19 seconds left, to lead Milwaukee over Charlotte.

Bogut's hoop capped Milwaukee's comeback from an eight-point deficit with 3:51 remaining. Mo Williams scored 17 for the Bucks.

Gerald Wallace scored 25 points, and Jason Richardson 21 for Charlotte, which has lost three straight games.

Nuggets 109, 76ers 96

At Denver, Allen Iverson scored 38 points to lead Denver over his former team.

Carmelo Anthony scored 23 points, including 19 in the first half to help Denver build a 53-43 halftime lead. Marcus Camby had 11 points and 12 boards.

Andre Miller, one of the players the Nuggets sent to Philadelphia in exchange for Iverson, led the Sixers with 22 points, and Samuel Dalembert pulled down 15 rebounds.

Lakers 112, Pacers 96

At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 12 of his 26 points in the third quarter, Andrew Bynum had 23 points and 13 rebounds, and Los Angeles beat Indiana for its 12th win in 15 games.

Derek Fisher scored 22 points, Lamar Odom had 13 points and 13 rebounds, and Luke Walton added 10 points and seven assists for the Lakers.

Mike Dunleavy led Indiana with 17 points, Danny Granger added 14, Jermaine O'Neal 13 and Kareem Rush 12 for the Pacers, who lost their fifth straight road game.

Smith, Tulsa roll over Bowling Green, 63-7

MOBILE, Alabama (AP)—Paul Smith enjoyed a U.S. college football-record 14th consecutive 300-yard passing game and Tulsa routed Bowling Green 63-7 in the GMAC Bowl on Sunday.

Tulsa converted four fumble recoveries into first-half touchdowns, running up a 35-0 halftime lead and capping coach Todd Graham's first season by reaching 10 wins for the first time since 1991. Tulsa had never managed more than 31 points in 14 previous bowl games.

Smith passed for 312 yards and five touchdowns, the last with 3:22 left in the blowout. He broke the record of 13 300-yard efforts in a row he shared with BYU's Ty Detmer, whose streak stretched over the 1989 and 1990 seasons.

He and Tarrion Adams joined Houston's David Klingler and Chuck Weatherspoon as college football's only 5,000-yard passing and 1,000-yard rushing tandem.

Tulsa outgained Bowling Green 562-229 in total yards.

Adams scored touchdowns running, passing and receiving before halftime and ran for 112 yards. Trae Johnson caught two scoring passes in the most lopsided bowl game this season, with only the national championship game remaining on Monday.

Jr. Nationals add to Proa's woes

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

The CNMI Junior Nationals kept Telesource Proa winless in the 2007 BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League.

The Junior Nationals blew past Proa, 89-65, Saturday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium to hike their record to 7-3 and cemented their hold of fifth place as the league enters the playoff round.

It was another sorry loss for Proa as they continue to struggle all season long to win a game. They were overpowered by most of their opponents losing games with double-digit deficits.

They ended their season against the Runnin' Rebels yesterday. The game was ongoing as of press time. The second game was between the Bombers and the Junior Nationals.

The Junior Nationals ended the first quarter up 28-14 and never looked back enjoying leads as much as 20 points. Their biggest lead was at 27 points, 76-49, after three quarters.

Jericho Cruz scored 19 points to lead the Nationals' balanced offensive onslaught with Steven Tenorio chipping in 17 markers.

JON PEREZ
Jericho Cruz of the Junior Nationals goes for a baseline shot in this file photo taken during one of their games in the 2007 BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball Leauge.

Jerome Norita added nine first half points, while Frank Blas, Keoni Chariton, Won Joo Jung combined for 24 points off the bench.

Syl Teregeyo had a game high 30 points for Proa, while Bobby Coldeen ended up with 16 markers.

The second game between PTI/FMI and the D-1 Ulloa's will be scheduled later this week. Both teams are still fighting for a playoff spot with one loss knocking them out of a spot in the next round.

Games tomorrow will have the Rebels battling the Junior Nationals in the 7pm contest, while Rock Steady closes out its season against the Marianas Health Services G-Rollers I at 8:30pm.

The Top 8 teams will advance to the playoffs, which begin on Jan. 14, with Ol'Aces taking on the eighth-seeded squad, while No. 2 battles No. 7. The third-ranked team clashes with No. 6 while No. 4 faces No. 5.

Junior Nationals 89 – Cruz 19, Tenorio 17, Norita 9, Blas 8, Chariton 8, Jung 8, Babauta 7, Moses 7, Rabauliman 6.

Telesource Proa 65 – Teregeyo 30, Coldeen 16, C. Tomokane 8, J. Tomokane 7, Castro 2, Hideo 2.

Scoring by quarters: 28-14, 60-33, 76-49, 89-65.

Giants book semis ticket; Realtors win

MANILA, Philippines—In playoff mode this early, Purefoods broke away late in the first quarter and went on to rip Coca-Cola, 101-87, Sunday night and formally clinch the first automatic semifinal seat in the Smart PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City.

The Tender Juicy Giants tore the game wide open using just a 9-0 run to close out the first period and eventually notched the all-important 12th win to reach the Final Four ahead of everyone else.

"We wanted to put our spirit to the test," said coach Ryan Gregorio, who made the semifinals with still two games left in their schedule. "We came to this game with a playoff mentality, that's why we played hard all the way."

James Yap scattered 29 points, while Jondan Salvador, in possibly his finest game since coming back from a career-threatening knee injury last year, scored six of his 12 points at the start of the second period.

The Giants, champions here two years ago, improved their leading card to 12-4.

They took a 24-16 lead with that 9-point burst and then opened up the second period with a 14-5 salvo that all but took the fight out of the otherwise game Tigers.

Coca-Cola lost for the second straight time and dropped to 6-10 overall, down in ninth place.

Sta. Lucia Realty earned at least a playoff for the second spot after winning a franchise-best seventh straight game later, 99-77, over struggling powerhouse Magnolia.

D9ERS

From Page 28

RBIs. Five more players ended up with two hits or more for the Tigers, which ended the season at third place and would likely face Rubak in the playoffs.

The Tigers also scored a 21-11 victory over Rubak Friday night with Reno Celis going 2-for-3 with three runs, a double, and a season high four RBIs.

Payton Sakuma tried to lift Rubak ending up with a perfect 3-for-3 batting with three runs, two doubles, and three RBIs.

Budweiser SML start

In other news, the Saipan Major League will meet at 6pm tonight at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium conference room to discuss the 2008 season of the 3rd Annual Budweiser SML.

The final date of the deadline of submission of the team rosters and the opening of the season are some of the items to be discussed in today's managers meeting.

Other things to be discussed in the meeting are the schedule of the games, league rules, and other matters concerning the coming season. The schedule of the playoff round of the Masters Baseball League is also up for discussion in the said meeting.

SML coordinator Tony Rogolifoi reminded interested teams to prepare early and they should start filling up their 25-player rosters and look for sponsors that would shoulder the $800 entrance fee.

They are planning to open the league by the second week of February.

For more information, call Rogolifoi at 288-3515 or email him at tonyrogolifoi@yahoo.com.

CAMACHO

From Page 28

straight strikes to pocket the 2007 title and snatch the crown away from Sablan's clutches.

In the Prince/Princess of the Lanes, Vales, who followed in the footsteps of older sister Jerrie and father Roger, scored a stunning upset to claim the top prize.

Vales was seeded fourth after the six-game roll-off, bringing down a total of 952 pins. She then met the top-seeded Zack Cruz, who had 1,112 pinfalls, in the semifinals.

Vales earned the first finals spot after a 176-166 upset win over Cruz, while second-ranked Jeremy Williams followed shortly after a 150-135 win over Raphael Zapanta.

Vales then swept Williams in the finals completing her title conquest with a 186-163 decision.

Williams earned the second seeding in the stepladder finals after finishing with 1,011 pinfalls, while Zapanta knocked down 977 pins to place third.

Other Prince/Princess of the Lanes qualifiers were Marion McKenzie, Ryan Gutierrez, Mayanne McKenzie, Carrie Camacho, and Nikko Gutierrez.

HEO

From Page 28

8-5, of Tasmania.

De Boer also won the 18-and-under crown when he defeated Queensland's Jake Alchin, 8-7, in the finals.

Heo won his first two matches against James MacCallum, 8-4, and Andrew Bell, 8-3, before having a bye in the Round IV Qualifier where he defeated Jarrod Liston, 8-4, to arrange a semifinal showdown against de Boer.

Heo made it to the Round of 32 of both age divisions scoring wins in the first two rounds. He opened the tournament with a hard-earned 7-6, 6-3, win over Andrew Donaldson of Parkhurst, Queensland on Thursday in the boys' 18-and-under division.

The 15-year-old Heo then defeated Lewis Ahern of East Allbury, New South Wales in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4, to make it into the Round of 32.

The Korean-born netter drew a bye in the first round of the 16-and-under division where he scored a 6-0, 6-3 win over Lewis Tenace in the Round of 64 before losing to Scobie in the Round of 32.

A total of 128 players are entered each in the 18-and-under and 16-and-under age groups.

Heo is competing in his first Australian junior championship tournament after being invited to become a member of the International Tennis Federation Pacific-Oceania Junior touring team late last year.

Heo received an invitation to join the ITF Pacific-Oceania Junior touring team in Australia last October. He left Saipan last Dec. 27 to join a group of Under-18 players that will travel around Australia from Dec. 30 to Jan. 18.

Heo's next tournament will be in the Margaret Court Cup from Jan. 8 to 12 then will close out his campaign in the Land Down Under in the CountryLink Victoria Junior Grasscourt Championships in Wodonga from Jan. 12 to 15.

HAFADAI

From Page 28

APHI suffered an 86-102 whipping from Hyatt last Dec. 9.

Elmer Esdrelon led APHI with 18 points, while Ryan Sanciangco, who missed their last games against Hyatt, ended up with 17 points, three rebounds, and two assists.

Tom Alegre scattered 10 points and had five rebounds, two assists, and a steal.

James Wabinga paced World Resort with 20 points, eight rebounds, three assists, and a steal, while Jerryfel Mangahis added 16 points, three rebounds, an assist, and two steals.

Ledon Redita and Dennis Vinas combined for 21 points and 10 rebounds. Vinas also had four assists, while Leonard Ramos, who only scored seven points, grabbed a team-high 10 rebounds.

First Game

Hafadai Beach Hotel 73 – Olaitiman 29, Bamba 17, Calayag 14, Baculod 5, Andal 4, Rodriguez 4.

Aquarius Hotel 62 – Garcia 25, Trajano 17, Alvarez 6, Achas 5, Cordero 4, Sarmiento 3, Camacho 2.

Scoring by quarters: 27-13, 43-34, 53-47, 73-62.

Second Game

APHI 87 – Esdrelon 18, Sanciangco 17, Alegre 10, Carino 7, Opone 7, Alipala 6, Dela Torre 6, Jinang 6, David 5, Licup 3, Manglona 2.

Saipan World Resort 77 – Wabinga 20, Mangahis 16, Redita 11, Vinas 10, Navarro 8, Ramos 7, Caruana 2, Mendoza 2, Neri 1.

Scoring by quarters: 30-13, 55-33, 73-49, 87-77.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	29	3	.906	–
New Jersey	17	16	.515	12 1/2
Toronto	17	17	.500	13
Philadelphia	14	20	.412	16
New York	8	24	.250	21

Southeast Division

Orlando	22	13	.629	–
Washington	17	15	.531	3 1/2
Atlanta	15	16	.484	5
Charlotte	11	21	.344	9 1/2
Miami	8	26	.235	13 1/2

Central Division

Detroit	26	8	.765	–
Cleveland	17	17	.500	9
Indiana	16	19	.457	10 1/2
Chicago	13	19	.406	12
Milwaukee	13	20	.394	12 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	23	9	.719	–
Dallas	23	11	.676	1
New Orleans	23	11	.676	1
Houston	17	17	.500	7
Memphis	10	23	.303	13 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	21	12	.636	–
Portland	21	13	.618	1/2
Utah	18	17	.514	4
Seattle	9	24	.273	12
Minnesota	4	29	.121	17

Pacific Division

Phoenix	23	10	.697	–
L.A. Lakers	21	11	.656	1 1/2
Golden State	19	15	.559	4 1/2
Sacramento	12	20	.375	10 1/2
L.A. Clippers	10	21	.323	12

Yesterday's Games

Cleveland 93, Toronto 90
Washington 108, Seattle 86
Dallas 101, Minnesota 78
San Antonio 88, L.A. Clippers 82
Memphis 101, Miami 94
Milwaukee 93, Charlotte 89
Denver 109, Philadelphia 96
L.A. Lakers 112, Indiana 96

MERCEDES-BENZ CHAMPIONSHIP SCORES

Final Round

x-Daniel Chopra,	$1,100,000	69-72-67-66	274
Steve Stricker,	$630,000	73-69-68-64	274
Stephen Ames,	$410,000	72-67-70-66	275
Mike Weir,	$310,000	71-67-68-70	276
Hunter Mahan,	$218,000	73-72-69-64	278
Jim Furyk,	$218,000	74-70-66-68	278
Nick Watney,	$218,000	68-72-67-71	278
Charles Howell III,	$175,000	74-70-68-67	279
Justin Leonard,	$175,000	73-68-69-69	279
Mark Calcavecchia,	$155,000	75-66-71-68	280
Brandt Snedeker,	$155,000	71-69-70-70	280
Aaron Baddeley,	$130,000	70-71-73-67	281
Chad Campbell,	$130,000	75-68-68-70	281
Vijay Singh,	$130,000	74-70-67-70	281
Angel Cabrera,	$105,000	70-71-70-71	282
Jonathan Byrd,	$105,000	70-69-69-74	282
Rory Sabbatini,	$90,000	72-74-69-69	284
Woody Austin,	$86,000	73-74-69-70	286
Scott Verplank,	$86,000	73-70-72-71	286
Charley Hoffman,	$81,000	75-72-70-70	287
Zach Johnson,	$81,000	76-67-71-73	287
Steve Flesch,	$81,000	72-70-71-74	287
Boo Weekley,	$76,000	80-74-68-66	288
Brian Bateman,	$76,000	76-70-72-70	288
Fred Funk,	$72,000	75-71-72-72	290
George McNeill,	$72,000	74-69-72-75	290
Mark Wilson,	$69,000	74-72-73-72	291
Henrik Stenson,	$67,500	76-75-73-68	292
K.J. Choi,	$67,500	79-75-69-69	292
Paul Goydos,	$66,000	81-73-67-73	294
Joe Ogilvie,	$65,000	75-73-74-74	296

x-won on fourth hole of playoff

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

Bud Cup Standings

x-Ol'Aces	11	1
y-Suns	10	2
y-Rock Steady	9	2
y-Sonics	9	3
y-Junior Nationals	7	3
Runnin Rebels	5	5
Bombers	5	6
G-Rollers I	5	6
PTI/FMI	5	6
D-I Ulloa's	4	7
G-Rollers II	3	9
Lali IV	1	11
Proa	0	11

x-clinches pennant
y-clinch playoff spot

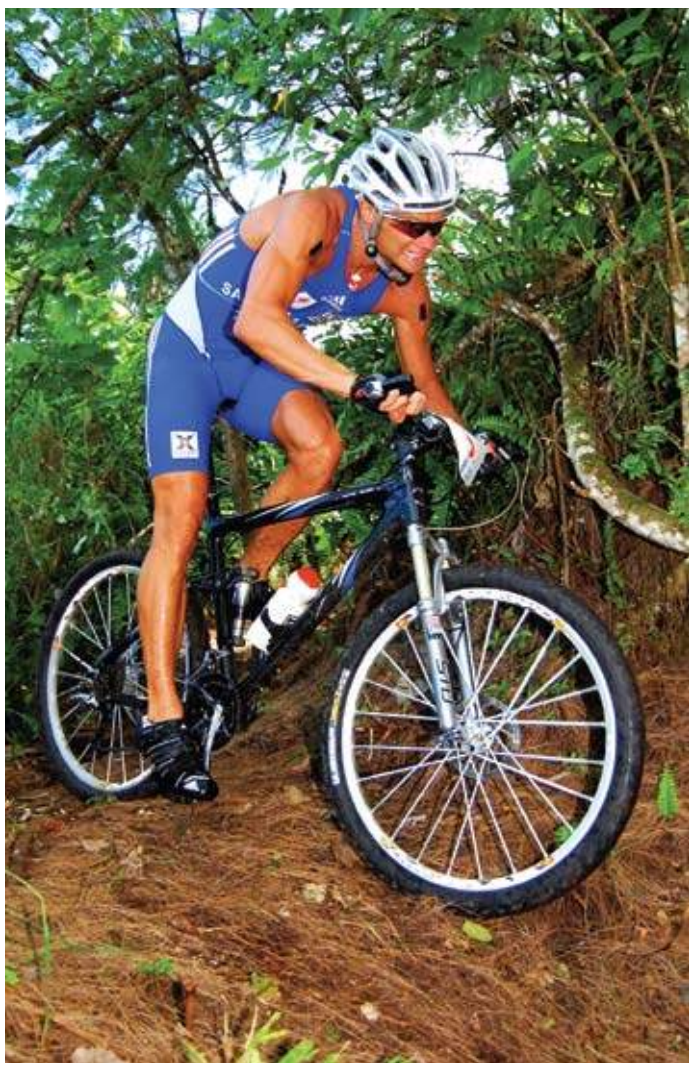
Masters Baseball Standings

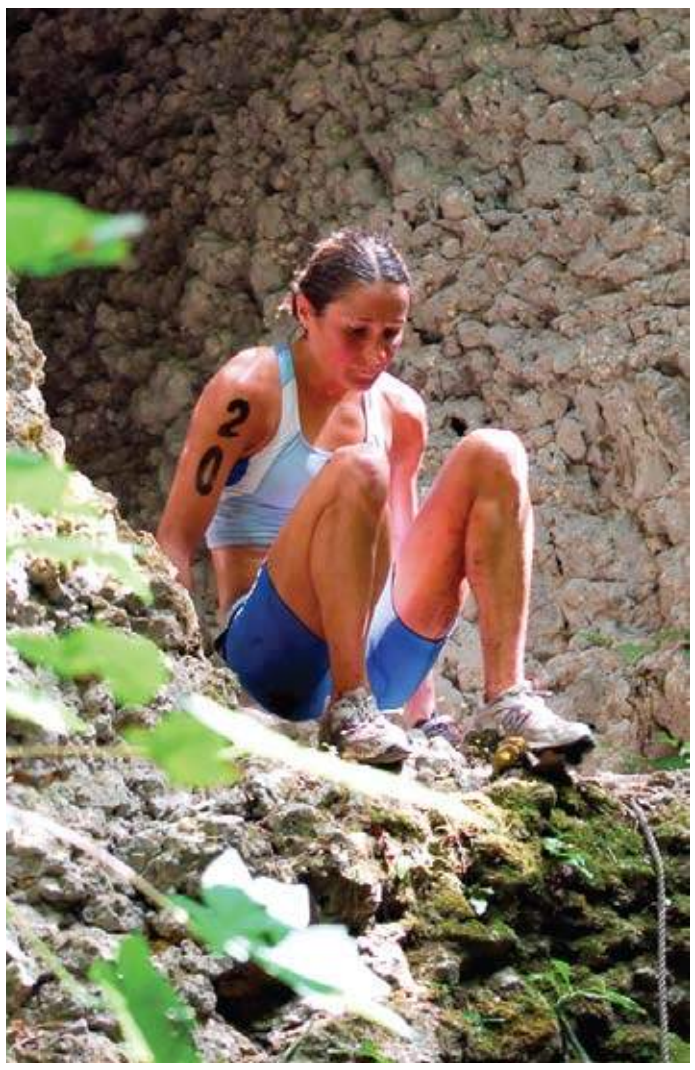
D-9ers	8	1
Rubak	6	3
Tigers	3	6
Korean Dreams	1	8

HANMI Cup Standings

Aqua Resort	2	0
APHI	2	1
PIC	1	0
Hyatt	1	1
Hafadai	1	2
Aquarius	0	1
World Resort	0	2

Champion pros to return for Saipan Sportsfest





RICH CRUSE ® XTERRA

2007 XTERRA Saipan Championship winners Olivier Marceau, left, and Renata Bucher will be back to defend their titles this coming March.

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

Local triathlon fans will again be treated to top caliber competition when the 2008 XTERRA Saipan Championships and the 18th Tagaman Triathlon return in March.

The 7th XTERRA Saipan is scheduled on March 7, while the Tagaman will be held on March 15 as part of the Saipan Sportsfest.

A 10-percent discount in the entrance fee for both races will be given to athletes who will join both events, called the Pacific Islands Club Double.

Aside from the XTERRA and Tagaman triathlons, other events in the Saipan Sportsfest are the Taga Kids, Sophia 7k and 10k Walk, special recreational activities, and clinics to be conducted by the professional triathletes.

Swiss duo Olivier Marceau and Renata Bucher will be back to defend their division titles. Marceau is a four-time XTERRA champion while Bucher has won the title in the past three years.

Out to foil their winning run are 2007 Tagaman winners Andrew Noble of Australia and Great Britain's Julie Dibbens. Jamie Whitmore, the first three-time women's champion and 2004 XTERRA World Championship winner, will also be back for the seventh straight time.

Organizers also invited the top finishers of the Kaike Triathlon in Japan, who have been participating in the PIC Double the last two years.

Cash and other exciting prizes await the professional athletes in both divisions. XTERRA awards cash prizes to the Top 10 male and female finishers with the champion getting $2,200 while the 10th placers receives $150.

The top male and female winner in the Tagaman receive $1,200 plus an all-expenses-paid return trip for next year's race. The sixth placer in both divisions will win $200 each.

Special medals will also be given away for all age group division winners in both events while similar medals will also be given in the Taga Kids and the Sophia 7k and 10k Walk to be held on March 15 and 16.

PIC, one of the major sponsors, will again be offering special rates to all participants while Northwest Airlines will waive all bike passages on their flights.

Other sponsors and partners in the Saipan Sportsfest are Coca Cola, Subway, the Departments of Public Safety, Public Works, and Public Health, the Marianas Visitors Authority.

For more information, email Bill Sakovich at swimsak@yahoo.com or Wolf Mojica at wolf@saipan.com or Kanae Quinn at dosm@picsaipan.com or Yoichi Matsumura at matsumura@pdisaipan.com.

'Bullit' pierces through final 9-ball tourney of 2007

By MARK RABAGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

R.J. "Bullit" Mascarinas finally broke Zheng Jian Qing's seeming stranglehold of the Top Pool Bar Professional 9-Ball Billiards Tournament last Dec. 29 at the Garapan sports bar and watering hole.

In a nip-and-tuck championship match, Mascarinas took advantage of lapses made by Zheng in the final game to take home the $50 first-place first.

Both players split the first six games of the race-to-four wins format, but in the final game, Zheng could not execute properly and uncharacteristically missed shot after shot.

Mascarinas took advantage of the Top Pool Bar owner's miscues and pocketed his remaining balls plus the 9-ball to give him the title. Zheng settled for the $30 runner-up prizemoney.

Mascarinas started off strong in the final 9-ball competition of 2007 by beating Primo Ferrera, 4-2, in the first round.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

R.J. "Bullit" Mascarinas took advantage of key miscues from Zheng Jian Qing to win the Top Pool Bar Professional 9-Ball Billiards Tournament last Dec. 29 at the Garapan sports bar and watering hole.

Other games in the opening round saw many time champion Rolly Villanueva oust mincing Vic "Hawk" S. Hocog, 4-3; Luis "Predator" Fajardo beat up-and-comer Erik Caisip, 4-1; and Zheng take out veteran cue artist Senen Pangelinan, 4-1.

In the second round, Mascarinas capitalized on a miss on the 7-ball by Villanueva to advance to the finals with a 4-3 victory.

Zheng, meanwhile, caught a break in his own semifinal duel against Fajardo when the latter scratched on a 9-ball cut.

Top Pool Bar is again inviting Saipan's elite billiards players to take part in the Top Pool Bar Professional 9-Ball Billiards Tournament set for next Saturday night, Jan 12. Registration for the tournament starts at 7pm.

The sports bar is also reminded interested 9-ball players that early birds get a chance to practice for free on any of Top Pool Bar's full-size billiard tables an hour before the competition.

Top Pool Bar, located along Hotel Street Garapan a stone's throw away from the Paseo de Marianas, is as spacious as it is modern and boasts of two 9-1/2-by-5-foot tables usually found in professional tournaments abroad.

For more information on the ongoing 9-ball weekly competition, call Zheng at 287-7676 or check out the competition's website at www.saipanero.com/bars/toppoolbar.

'2008 Winter Festival of Runs' to benefit Wakai Nekko No Kai

By MARK RABAGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Ten percent of proceeds from the "2008 Winter Festival of Runs" will be donated to the Friends of Wakai Nekko No Kai Ocean University, according to the Saipan Mayor's Office.

In an email, Tony Benavente said a portion of the money raised in the 3rd Annual Saipan Marathon, 27th Annual Half Marathon, and 22nd Annual 10km Fun Run—all set for Jan. 19—will be given to the ocean university's founder and president Hideo Kato.

"[It] will assist Mr. Hideo Kato, president and founder of the university, with his current financial predicament to repay the mortgage on the Nekko House in Tokyo, Japan. Mr. Kato is a longtime friend of the people of Saipan for 39 years," said Benavente in his email.

The Saipan Marathon will begin at Micro Beach, with runners traveling north along Middle Road, through the villages of Puerto Rico, Tanapag, and San Roque.

The event will have a start time of 4:30am and runners must complete the race before 11am. Entry fee for the Saipan Marathon is $35.

The 27th Annual Half Marathon and 22nd Annual 10km Fun Run, meanwhile, will also commence from the American Memorial Park on the same date.

The Half Marathon will begin at Micro Beach, traveling south along Beach Road, through the villages of Garapan, San Jose, Susupe, Chalan Kanoa, and San Antonio. The turnaround is at the main entrance of the Pacific Islands Club and returns and finish at Micro Beach. The course will have seven aid stations.

The 10km run, meanwhile, will have runners start from Micro Beach and travel south along Beach Road, through the villages of Garapan and San Jose. The turnaround is at Ladera Center where runners will retrace their steps to the finish line at Micro Beach. Five aid stations will be on the course.

The Half Marathon and 10km run will begin at 5:45am and entry fee is $25.

Registration for the three events, organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority and Northern Marianas Athletics, after the early bird deadline of Jan. 13 will be assessed $10 more in entry fees. Deadline for registration for the three races is Jan. 18.

All participants will receive an official commemoration T-shirt, which can be picked up immediately after the event.

The day before the 2008 Winter Festival of Runs, orientation will be held beginning 4pm at the AMP followed by Spaghetti Dinner at 5pm. The awards banquet for the three races will begin at 11:30am on Jan. 19.

Each runner will receive a certificate of accomplishment and a printed listing of results from all three races. Medals and trophies will be presented to age group winners and a participation medal to marathon finishers.

For more information about the 3rd Annual Saipan Marathon, 27th Annual Half Marathon, and 22nd Annual 10km Fun Run, contact Ed Diaz at 664-3210 or email at ediaz@mymarianas.com.

Registration forms are also available at the Saipan Mayor's Office or those interested may call Tony Benavente at 234-6208 or 235-7444 at the Mayor's Office during regular working hours.

Champion pros to return for Saipan Sportsfest

Local triathlon fans will again be treated to top caliber competition when the 2008 XTERRA Saipan Championships and the 18th Tagaman Triathlon return in March.

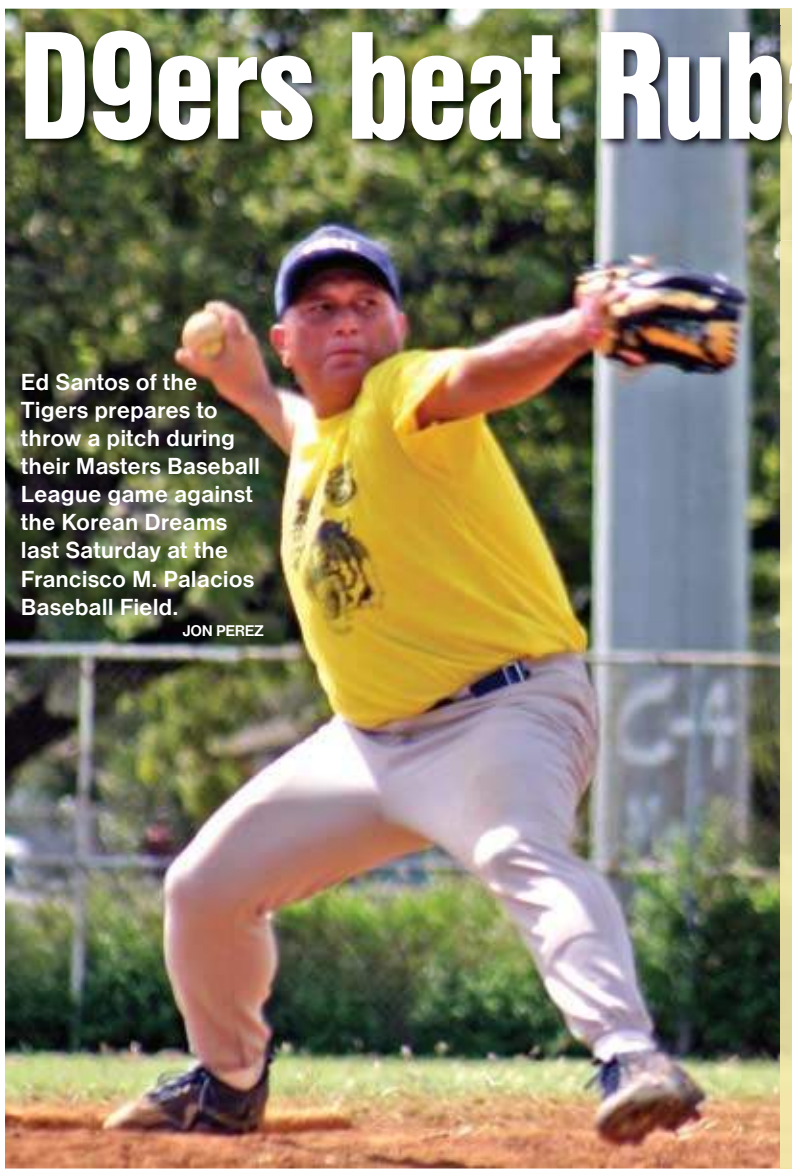
27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Jaguars stun Steelers on late field goal

Never in the Steelers' 75 seasons had a team beaten them twice in Pittsburgh in the same season. The Jaguars beat history—and the Steelers—despite a memorable fourth-quarter collapse that nearly cost Jacksonville its season. 24

D9ers beat Rubak, claim pennant



Ed Santos of the Tigers prepares to throw a pitch during their Masters Baseball League game against the Korean Dreams last Saturday at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.
JON PEREZ

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

Saipan Stevedore D9ers claimed the 2007 Masters Baseball League pennant, while the Atty. Bob O'Connor Tigers scored consecutive wins to end the regular season in games held over the weekend at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

D9ers used a seven-run third-inning scoring drive to pull off a 14-9 win over Rubak, while the Tigers clawed past the Dreams, 20-9, in Saturday's games.

It was the D9ers' eighth straight triumph to end the elimination round with an 8-1 record. The D9ers' lone loss was against the Atty. Johnson Toribiong-sponsored Team Rubak, 5-8, on Nov. 4. They did not lose after that and twice defeated their opening day tormentors.

The D9ers claimed the pennant and the top seeding in the playoffs. Team Rubak finished the season in second place with a 6-3 mark followed by the Tigers' 3-6 slate and the 1-8 record of the Viva Poker Korean Dreams.

Larry Tenorio went 3-for-4 scoring four runs, with one double, and three RBIs while Greg Camacho, 3-for-5, had three runs and three RBIs.

Shortstop Ben Mesa, who walked in his second at bat, went 2-for-3 scoring one run and had three RBIs. Ton Camacho was held to a 1-for-4 batting but scored on a run and had two RBIs.

Leo Bobai and Taylor Watanabe combined for 4-for-8 in batting with two doubles and two RBIs. Bobai also scored twice while Watanabe touched home plate once.

Mabel Ngirngemelas and Poland Masaharu were held to a combined 2-for-6 in batting while scoring two runs and had four RBIs.

Paul Camacho earned the win for the D9ers pitching for three innings and limiting Rubak to four earned runs on six hits with one strikeout and three walks.

Mel Sakisat pitched four innings in relief and held Rubak to two runs on four hits with no walks and struck out three batters.

In the first game, the Tigers peppered Dreams pitchers Jeon So Hung and Nick Guerrero with 21 hits to cruise to a 20-9 win.

Ben Cabrera led the Tigers' offense going 3-for-4 with four runs and three

See D9ERS on Page 26

Heo ends campaign in Shepparton

JON PEREZ
Ji Hoon Heo goes for a forehand return in this file photo taken in one of his games in the DFS Micronesian Tennis Tournament last year at the Pacific Islands Club courts.

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

A semifinal loss in the consolation draw ended Ji Hoon Heo's campaign in the 2008 Ducats G.V. Junior Tennis Tournament in Shepparton, Australia last Sunday.

Heo, a member of the ITF Pacific-Oceania Junior touring team, made it to the semifinals of both the 16-and-under and 18-and-under divisions but lost consecutively against tough opponents from the host team at the Shpparton Lawn Tennis Club.

The CNMI's Heo advanced to the semis of the 16-and-under division after an 8-3 win over Adam Paulo De Romas, but his hopes of entering the finals of the consolation draw ended with a heartbreaking 7-8 loss to Blake Gregor of Griffith, New South Wales.

Gregor went on to win the 16-and-under consolation draw title after squeezing out an 8-7 decision against Jasmin Besic of Noble Park.

It was the same story for Heo in the 18-and-under division where he won his quarterfinals match against Jarod Liston, 8-4, only to lose in the semis against the 10th-seeded Rory de Boer,

See HEO on Page 26

Camacho and Vales take home bowling tiaras

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

Veteran kegler Diane Camacho and up-and-coming youth bowler Jamie Vales claimed the Queen and Princess of the Lanes bowling titles respectively after Sunday's finals of the yearlong tenpin tournament held at the Capital Bowling Center in Garapan.

Camacho, the 2005 champion, was the top qualifier after the eight-game series and enjoyed a bye together with the second-ranked and defending champion Gina Sablan in the stepladder finals.

Camacho knocked down a total of 1,429 pins followed by Sablan's 1,408. The other four bowlers, which made the Top 6, played against each other in the semifinals.

Ron Cal placed third with 1,404 pinfalls, losing second place to Sablan by four pins, while Gloria Omechelang placed fourth with 1,369. Elena Soll, 1,363, and Emi Williams, 1,326, completed the Top 6.

Cal met Williams in the elimination round, while Soll and Omechelang played in the other match. Cal defeated Williams, 191-161, to earn the chance of facing Camacho while Soll beat Omechelang, 164-156, to advance to the semifinals against Sablan.

Camacho then earned the first finals spot after a 165-157 win over Cal, while Sablan followed shortly after beating Soll, 171-158.

In the finals, Sablan led most of the way earning a baby split in the eight frame before leaving the ninth open. She then bowled a strike in her first try in the 10th frame before settling for a spare in her final throw to end up with a 167.

Sablan was hoping that Camacho would choke in her final bowl to complete her back-to-back title bid.

The veteran Camacho, however, saved her best for last, throwing three

See CAMACHO on Page 26

JON PEREZ
Diane Camacho, left, and Jamie Vales pose for a photo after winning the Queen and Princess of the Lanes titles Sunday night at the Capital Bowling Center.

Hafadai ends two-game slide

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

Hafadai Beach Hotel started 2008 with a bang after beating debuting Aquarius Hotel, 73-62, as games in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-hotel Basketball League resumed Sunday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The win ended Hafadai's two-game slide and brought them out of the cellar in the seven-team field. Saipan World Resort holds a 0-2 record and remains in the bottom of the standings.

Mike Olaitiman almost single-handedly lifted Hafadai to victory, scattering 17 points in the first half to help his team enjoy a 43-34 lead at the half. He finished with 29 points.

Marlon Bamba and Fernan Calayag added 17 and 14 markers for Hafadai, which missed the services of top scorer Pete Iguel. Bamba also had 10 rebounds.

Jeff Garcia finished with 25 points for Aquarius Hotel, while Art Trajano had a double-double performance with 17 points and a season-high 15 rebounds.

In the second game, Asia Pacific Hotel Inc. bounced back from a loss against Hyatt Regency Saipan last month and dealt Saipan World Resort an 87-77 loss.

See HAFADAI on Page 26